

# *Fires of Fate*

*Wilbur Finley Fauley*



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# FIRES OF FATE

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# FIRES OF FATE

*A Mystery Novel*

BY

WILBUR FINLEY FAULEY

*Frontispiece by*

FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON

METROPOLITAN BOOK SERVICE  
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TO MY  
THREE NIECES,  
WANNA, RAMONA AND DOROTHY  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.



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\* Chapter XXV contains the full solution of the murder mystery, including the three paragraphs that are written backwards.

## PREFATORY NOTE

This tale is purely an invention. The characters are wholly imaginary, and not portraits of actual persons. Many of the locations are real in so far as they help to carry out the realities of the plot. The book is largely concerned, in the thought back of it, with revelations in the psychological world, particularly with regard to mental suggestion, and the phenomena of hypnotism.





# FIRES OF FATE

## CHAPTER I

### THE FACE IN THE CROWD

**T**WO fashionably gowned women were discussing the bride.

“I’ll wager she has a past as long as Fifth Avenue,” observed the first.

“My dear, she has nothing—not even a past,” the second commented.

The whispered conversation died away as Honoria Karley, the bridegroom’s aunt, and his nearest blood kin, swept down the aisle of the little cloistered chantry of St. Jude’s like a mediæval queen on her way to the headsman’s block; and her manner of walking seemed to convey to all of her assembled friends that her nephew’s choice of a bride was most distasteful to her.

The occasion marked the marriage of Anne

Hambleton, a girl of the people, to Grenville Karley, a monied aristocrat. It was one of those hurried nuptials that followed the war, and on the face of things, a very quiet and exclusive function.

There was a wicked hope growing in the heart of the aunt that before the ceremony was over her nephew would realize his great mistake. Honoria was a type of aristocrat becoming almost extinct in New York, with its horde of newly rich in their diamonds and motors, and she regarded this union as nothing short of a social catastrophe. The idol of her heart, the last prop of the house of Karley, had chosen his bride from among the common herd.

Now the young woman he should have married was sitting in the pew directly across the aisle, the beautiful and ultra-fashionable Iris Sanderson. At least, Iris was the aunt's choice; and just to observe how the poor girl was holding up under the ordeal, Honoria gave her a nervous side glance, but Iris sat with perfectly immobile countenance and thin white lips.

Still, no one in the congregation realized just what it all meant to Honoria, this mating of a son of the elect with a daughter of the Philistines,

this democratizing of the house of Karley. She had fought so hard to prevent the union; and now the only weapon left for her was the social superiority of the guests, all a close ring of people, her intimates. She knew their sense of innate importance, their power to wither with cold-blooded uppishness. If this did not humble the bride, surely it would shake her nephew's pride, the Karley family's most vulnerable point.

Several pews back of the aunt sat Lady Dawkins, a rheumatic and somewhat deaf dowager, recently transplanted from England to her native soil, and her escort, Burke Puggins, a dandy in society in mid-Victorian days. They also had been discussing the bride *sotto voce*; and Puggins had just whispered to the dowager: "In taking a wife and in buying a second-hand automobile, shut your eyes and commit yourself to God," when a fussy old dame in the next pew turned directly upon them, and said, "Sh!"

A moment later the organ prelude began to echo through the recessed gloom of the chantry, which was separated from the main body of the church by a huge stone colonnade. This afforded Puggins and Lady Dawkins the opportunity to continue their conversation, which had been cut

short back in 1877, when she jilted Puggins and married an Englishman of title, an unusual incident in international society in those days.

“You were a horrid boy,” Lady Dawkins was saying. “Do you remember when you kissed me behind the door?”

“Behind the ear?” Puggins whispered back, being a little deaf on the left side. “By gad, I remember it well.” And his watery eyes lighted up in dimmed but pleasant retrospect.

The dowager lady let it go at that; behind the door or ear, it did not matter now. She sighed.

“What is more depressing than these dull middle-aged hats?” she commented as she viewed the backs of the assembly through her tortoiseshell lorgnette.

“Eh?” asked Puggins, cupping his ear with his hand.

Lady Dawkins implied mutely that the ceremony had begun, craning her neck to get an unobstructed view of the bride. And it was not long before the voice of the officiating clergyman seemed to reverberate with these words:

“. . . Forasmuch as Grenville Karley and Anne Hambleton have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before

God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining hands; I pronounce that they are man and wife. . . .”

The voice died away in a sepulchral whisper in the far recesses of the church, where a young woman was kneeling before the shrine of the golden cross. It was the stranger's first intimation that a marriage ceremony was in progress in the chantry, so long and so deeply had she been engrossed in prayer. She arose and slipped quietly into a pew.

Grenville was tall and rather wiry, possessing that clean-cut physical fitness which comes from constant devotion to sports. But the hard lines upon his face—and he was only thirty-five, betrayed his proclivities to enervating vice and luxury. Withal, a proud, reticent young man; selfish, licentious, and, oftentimes, cruel.

Honorina, frigid and formal, stood beside her nephew and his bride, with the sanctified air of martyrdom, during the impromptu reception that followed the ceremony. Lady Dawkins and Puggins were waiting their turn to go forward. Puggins was squinting at the bride over his

pince-nez. "A deuced pretty young woman, by gad!" he commented.

"But she's a Miss Nobody from nowhere," returned the dowager lady; "as poor as Job's turkey, and not an ancestor to her name. So many of these war-time romances have proved to be a failure."

"In time of war, physical force settles everything," said Puggins. "As the Bible says, after any engagement among the Canaanites, there was 'to every man a damsel or two.'"

"Her beauty seems to be her only asset," Lady Dawkins went on placidly; "a decidedly brunette type."

"But very quiet and reserved, don't you think?"

The dowager lady challenged him. "Still waters run deep, you know."

Puggins took another squint at the bride. "She is very dark, isn't she? Looks to me like a beautiful Indian princess."

Whereupon Lady Dawkins imparted some startling information to her escort. "Honorina tells me that the bride's father's first wife was a full-blooded American Indian, but that her own mother was a white woman."

“Rather remote, eh?” remarked Puggins.

“Oh, she’s just as white as you or me,” returned Lady Dawkins, “but she seems to have inherited this strain of race, in coloring at least. Nothing to hold against her, you know. All women have something of the savage in their make-up, a strain of the primitive.” She stopped short. “Who is that man shaking hands with the bride?”

“Oh, that’s Rodney Webb, editor of that clever political weekly called *Truth*,” replied Puggins.

“I don’t think I ever met him,” the dowager lady remarked, as she took a more intimate view of the man through her lorgnette. She saw that he was a man of forty-odd, with a slim figure, almost waspish, his every movement delicate and fastidious. She also noted that his eyes were greenish, and deepset.

“There’s a brilliant mind for you,” Puggins continued. “In fact, Webb is New York’s most famous dilettante. He goes everywhere, is accepted by everybody, and yet society fears him, for he wields his pen like a sword.”

“I know the type,” purred Lady Dawkins.

“He tells the naked truth about everybody except himself.”

“He’s a whited sepulchre,” said Puggins grimly.

“Not filled with dead men’s bones, I hope?”

“No; with the souls of women he has blackened.”

“Oh, how intensely interesting,” declared the dowager lady.

It was a blustery April day outside, but the formalities of this hastily arranged marriage were no sooner over than the sunshine flooded the church. The strange young woman who had come in to pray was now standing in the chantry entrance, being drawn there by natural curiosity to look upon the bride and bridegroom. She stood a little apart from a small group of uninvited guests, mostly women, who break unceremoniously into all smart church weddings, her slim figure intercepting a beam of sunlight, and projecting a black shadow upon the chantry floor.

The bridal couple had started down the aisle, running the gauntlet of cold, steely eyes and uplifted lorgnettes, raised like instruments of chastisement—so Anne felt.



She clutched her husband's arm, and tried to keep her eyes upon the floor. Would she never come out of this depth of cloistered shadows, the cold scrutiny of eyes; this sitting-in-judgment attitude that depressed her?

Then came the shadow upon the reddish stone floor—the shadow of a woman, so distinct that Anne involuntarily checked herself from stepping upon it, as if it had been something alive. She raised her eyes, and gave a quick glance over her shoulder, to the left. She noticed the young woman standing by the pilaster in the passageway—the woman who cast the shadow. Their eyes met. She felt the flash from the stranger's eyes as though it had been a spark. Somehow she felt her muscles relax; her overwrought nerves grew passive.

What did it mean, this face in the crowd? It was the only friendly face, the only smiling eyes, in the assembly. In the fleeting glance she realized that the young woman bore a striking resemblance to herself; she noted the dark complexion, almost like an Indian's. Then the thought flashed in her mind's pan: "Here is someone at least who understands me—who pities me."

Emerging from the church, Anne breathed freer, happier, in the open air. She stepped into the monogrammed limousine that was soon to whisk her and her new-found happiness to the railroad terminal.

As the motor car rolled noiselessly through the maze of the traffic, she leaned rather wearily against Grenville. They had plenty of time in which to catch the five-thirty for Lenox.

"Well, thank God, that's over with!" Grenville was the first to break the silence.

By right of possession he should have been at this moment the happiest of bridegrooms. Instead he faced a fact as cold as steel, as pitiless as hungry wolves—his marriage had been a great mistake.

The strategy of his adored Aunt Honoria had done its deadly work, although he had walked into the trap blindly. In staging this cold, critical wedding assembly she had made him realize as never before that he alone was a living part of this social sphere into which he had been born; its traditions and unwritten laws could never be shared in common with this young woman he had taken for his wife. Her likes and dislikes, her

mode of living, were utterly foreign to his own. She was a daughter of the Philistines, and she would ever be a stranger in a strange land—his land.

He seemed to be suddenly stripped of all the illusions that had attended his first attachment to the girl. Across the screen of his troubled consciousness flashed the picture of their first meeting, at one of the lesser embarkation ports in Virginia, the threshold to a thousand battle-fields, to suffering, to hate, and grim death.

On the train Anne huddled close to him. He was a man of few words, and she had become accustomed to his long silences. Somehow she felt infinitely happy just to be snuggled up to him. She felt relieved that the fuss and confusion of the wedding ceremony were over. While the veiled insolence of the aunt, and the poison of tongues and glances, had not escaped her entirely, she felt this was no time to reason it out, or allow it to interfere with her great happiness.

. . . That night she wondered why her mind did not respond, as she meant it should, to that definite joy of living that was now her own.

Then came the remembrance of the face in the crowd, the sparking of eyes, like the flashing of a wireless message between two ships that pass in the night.

## CHAPTER II

### AT MEADOWMERE

**I**T was a phenomenon of nature, perhaps, that Anne had inherited the dark beauty and graceful lines of an Indian woman, and something of the characteristics of that race, from her father, whose first wife had been a full-blooded Seneca woman. No doubt her type was transmitted by the father, who, subconsciously, reproduced the image of his first wife profoundly impressed upon his memory.

Anne's mother, a white woman, had an elevation of mind far superior to her station in life, and after her husband's death she had managed to keep her little family of two—daughter and son—together by taking in sewing. Anne was just thirteen when her mother became an invalid, so she had to seek employment; and until she was twenty-four years old she clerked in a bookshop, while her brother worked in the shipyards.

By nature studious, she took advantage of this dull, drab existence as a book clerk and practically gained her education from the bookshelves. Monotony and care developed the suppression of her true self. She had a very quiet disposition, but inside of her was that growing, insistent demand of youth for a chance to be young, to play, to kiss, to find its mate, and when mated, to rear its young.

Then came the world war, and the breaking up of family ties. By two swift strokes of fate, she had been bereft of home and kindred.

Her first meeting with Grenville, then an officer in the Quartermaster's Corps, was as a canteen worker, when she had access to the embarkation piers. One day she disobeyed orders by breaking through the ranks, and it was Grenville who, in his official capacity, seized her roughly by the arm, and swore at her. Instead of resenting his brutality, she had smiled up at him.

The extremes of their generation and opposite temperaments had touched, and flashed into instant recognition and affection through the instinct of blood. Grenville had been an aristocratic recluse most of his life, devoting himself

chiefly to sports and to women who poison the souls of men, and leaving the interests of his vast inherited estate to menials. Under the glamor of war and the uncertainty of life, he experienced the tug of the paternal. His race would die out if he did not have a son. Men of his own social stamp were marrying these clean, robust girls of common parentage. Of all the young women he had met, Anne seemed the most capable of stepping up to his plane in life.

To Anne, marriage with an officer meant escape from all the drabness of life; and there was just enough romance in her relations with Grenville to blind her to the fact that she was more in love with love than with the man.

As his wife, she had only been allowed brief glimpses of his world; a strange world to Anne, where birth and tradition had their money value. Fleeting glimpses had shown her, however, that it was a world where masks, more or less transparent, were worn by husbands and wives.

She had spent most of her married life at Meadowmere, Grenville's country place on Long Island, which he had been keeping open as his year-round residence since entering the political arena; a picturesque old pile, built on Eliza-

bethan lines, and commanding a distant view of the sea.

Home ties play an important rôle in political campaigns, but Anne somehow had been a bit slow in warming up to this fact, such was the deep groove of martyrdom into which she had allowed her general life to run.

Always she had feared the day when she would be endured only for the sake of appearances. That day had come and passed. She had brought a weakling child into the world, a child upon whose shoulders was to rest the heritage of the Karleys; and Grenville seemed to hate her for it, just as she was beginning to hate this cold comfort of luxury when so much was denied her.

Also she had tried, and most ineffectually, to come up to the aunt's standard. Nothing hurt her quite so much as the knowledge that Honoria still held prior claim upon Grenville; and she could not help feeling, in the steely face of things, that the aunt had been the controlling factor in the termination of his marital relations with her.

After all, what did it matter? She was blessed with a son. The province of the male in reproduction is but slight and brief. She—woman—was the race. Out of her blood and bones and



vital powers she had evolved, fashioned and nurtured, a son. This child of hers was part of the mother; it had been warmed by her warmth, fed by her blood. Could she not always content herself with this rich virtue of supreme motherhood?

Yet at times there would flame up something of the restlessness inherent within her; a raging protest against circumstance. Was it true, after all, that woman's nature is to be false except to a man, and man's nature to be true except to a woman? How much longer could she hold Grenville as the inspiration of sacred emotions? His selfishness was almost a mania; he lived entirely for himself—affable and generous in the presence of strangers—mean, contemptible and grasping at his own fireside. She hated herself at times for her weakness. She hated herself for sitting at Meadowmere, day in and day out, waiting, watching.

Her tragic retrospect was broken by Grenville's voice on the telephone. He was telephoning from town as usual; and as usual he had political appointments to keep him in town for the greater part of the week. But he would surely be home on Friday; and he had invited some friends down for the week-end.

“Lady Dawkins and your old admirer, Mr. Puggins. They’ll come by train, and I’m bringing Miss Sanderson down in the car.”

“Too bad your Aunt Honoria isn’t coming,” said Anne. “She hasn’t seen Gwennie since last spring. I’m sure she would find him improved since then.”

“I’m afraid Aunt has her sleeves rolled up for the political battle. She’s opened her house, and is planning all sorts of things, a sort of social campaign, to get votes, she says. Awfully nice of her, too, considering this unseasonably hot weather.”

“Perhaps she might if you insist,” said Anne. “Odd numbers in guests, you know, are rather awkward when it comes to cards.”

“Oh, yes; Rodney Webb is coming. That’ll even things up. He’s been fishing for a look-in at our establishment ever since that week-end at Southampton. You remember——at Mrs. Trevort’s?”

“I remember,” replied Anne, with a little tired sigh.

“I’m not particularly fond of the man myself,” Grenville put in, “but he can do me a great service politically in *Truth*. We must be nice

to him. He 'phoned me this morning that he's going down to Syosset for a couple of days, and he will motor over from there."

A moment of silence ensued, then Anne said: "Isn't there something I can do to help you—politically? I hear Mrs. de Peyster is to stump for her husband."

Grenville answered readily. "Oh, but old de P. hasn't a ghost of a show against a man who has a wife and child at home."

This was the most cheerful thing she had heard in many days, and it thrilled her. No longer was she isolated from the procession of events. The fact that she and Gwennie were now a part of her husband's scheme for political aggrandizement seemed to fire her with a passion to help him in his career.

Perhaps they had reached the bend in the road. Around the turn she could even sense a new start in their married existence, with minds companioned. She would have photographs made of herself, clasping Gwennie to her breast. In her mind's eye she could see the picture in thousands of homes, symbolic of a man's castle.

Then Rodney Webb bobbed up in her mind. Through him she might render a great service to

Grenville, and make certain his victory at the polls; a service she could undertake perhaps without her husband's knowledge. Why not try to beat the aunt at her own game of seeking votes? She would turn the week-end party into a little field of campaign.

At this juncture, Iris Sanderson loomed up suddenly in her thoughts. Perhaps the aunt was sending her down to Meadowmere to investigate her marital infelicity after the long drawn out silence of the summer. What was to hinder her from fooling, from dazzling dear Iris? Instead of an ugly chrysalis, with a tear-stained face, always the sign of neglected wifehood, she would emerge as a butterfly.

Thus new hopes, designs, gave wings to her preparedness.

Dawn found her more alive than ever to the exigencies of the moment. The day was sultry—not a leaf seemed stirring. After a long walk along the country lanes, she took a plunge in the pool. That night she brushed up on political education, ransacking the library. She sat in the living room, with books piled knee-high about her, and in the quietness of the evening she read and absorbed things political until her head fairly

ached. Then out of the quietude came a small voice.

Startled, she ran to the foot of the staircase, and there, at the head of the stairs, in his "nightie," stood Gwennie.

"Muvver," the child called weakly; and held out his little hands appealingly.

With a choking cry she stumbled up the stairs, and knelt on the steps below him. He had walked from the nursery unassisted, as if through some miracle he had been suddenly made strong. She called for the nurse.

The child, a wan smile on his thin lips, took a step forward. "Gwennie walk, muvver," he lisped proudly.

"Blessed be God!"

Anne, as she spoke, reached up and took him in her arms. The nurse came running down from the upper story, alarmed at first, then rejoicing with the mother. It was the first time the child had walked in months. Just now he was gazing with wondering eyes at the commotion he had caused. His eyes seemed to say: "Why make such a fuss when a young gentleman starts out for a walk?" He toddled away

towards the nursery, but soon sank down with a tired sigh.

Anne gathered him up in her arms, and walked back and forth, with his head upon her shoulder, until he slept. The child had deep, golden rings of hair, being fair haired and fair skinned like the father. There was not a trace in features or coloring of the mother who bore him. It was as if Anne had been only the susceptible and impressionable mould that had nursed to life the reincarnation of the Karley race.

Her first impulse was to call up Grenville and tell him the glad news. Then she recalled that his aunt was entertaining at dinner, and at nine o'clock Grenville would probably be engrossed in politics. But she did call up Dr. John Jex, her friend and physician, who lived on a neighboring estate, and whose comfort and sympathy was ever like a tonic. She felt too keyed up to go to bed, so elected to sit a while and read. As Peterson was closing up for the night, she thought she heard a low rumble of thunder. Or was it the hollow sound the little wooden bridge, down at the turn of the main road, gave out at the passing of speeding motor cars?

She listened as the butler's footfalls died away in the long hall that led to the servants' quarters in the east wing of the house. The nursery, where Gwennie and the nurse were now sleeping soundly, was peculiarly isolated in the west wing. She resumed her reading. A half hour passed, then she raised her eyes instinctively from her book and listened. Everything had grown ghastly still. The light from the reading lamp fell in soft radiance about her; the living room, with its characteristic Elizabethan details, beamed ceiling, rough walls and wide plank floor, had merged into a background of deep shadows.

Then, with alarming suddenness, the storm broke in all its fury. Wind and thunder seemed to shake the old house to its foundation stones; the rain beat against the windows, and the soot came down the great chimney.

Anne walked to a small window that was raised slightly, looking out upon a protected corner of the house. She liked to listen to the rising and falling tones of the storm, like the crescendo and diminuendo of a symphony orchestra. And it was during a momentary lull that she thought she heard the rumble of the wooden

bridge, immediately followed by a cry of distress. The bridge marked a dangerous curve in the road. Perhaps there had been an accident.

Five minutes passed. The storm continued unabated. Hearing no further sound of voices she went back to her reading. But she could not read. The clock in the hall struck one. Sleep seemed farther removed than ever. To occupy herself she tiptoed upstairs to the nursery, to satisfy herself that the storm had not awakened Gwennie.

She was coming downstairs when she heard a knock at the front door. Curious and unafraid, she unbolted and opened the inner door. Just beyond, through the meshes of the securely fastened screen door, the face of a man appeared, faintly illumined.

“Sorry to intrude upon your hospitality at this hour, but I’ve been in a motor smashup. It was all I could do to drag myself up here through the storm.”

She did not recognize the voice, although it sounded rather familiar. One of the neighbors, perhaps. “Please come in.”

The visitor limped into the hallway, and as Anne closed the door against the force of the



wind, he removed his felt hat, dripping wet, and shook his water-proof coat like a spaniel. He stood revealed in the dim glow of the hall light.

“Oh, Mr. Webb!” she exclaimed in surprise.

Rodney looked at her with a curious smile, laving the moisture from his classic-cut features. “I’m equally surprised,” he said. “I had no idea this was Meadowmere. I saw a light at the window, and—well, any port in a storm, they say.”

Anne started for the living room. “I’ll call Peterson,” she said.

“Please, don’t bother,” urged Rodney.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT THE STORM BROUGHT

**A**NNE set about with fearless sincerity to make the after-midnight visitor comfortable.

“You must think me a scoundrel,” said Rodney, “for this unholy intrusion.” He sat down on a Gothic chair in the hall, for he was still suffering from the shock.

Anne regarded him curiously for a moment. Sensing her anxiety, he rose. “The shock will soon pass,” he said.

“Let me call Peterson, please, or get you some brandy.”

Rodney remonstrated politely, and with a quiet smile, produced a silver flask from his hip pocket. He took a swallow or two. “I do feel a bit damp,” he resumed. “Still, the chauffeur should be back within an hour. He’s making his way to the village for another conveyance.”

Anne lit the fire in the living room, while Rod-

ney drew up a chair and started smoking. When he saw her making for the stairs he called after her. She paused.

“Your prescription is working beautifully—an easy chair, a cigarette, blazing logs. Really, what more could an unwelcome patient desire?”

Anne retraced her steps. “Unwelcome?” she queried.

“What else am I to infer when you run away from me?” He pretended to pout. “After all, this is very comfy. A wonderfully homey nest you have.” He glanced around the room. “Too bad that husband of yours is kept tied up with business and politics in town so much of the time.”

“It is very thoughtful of you to admit that I have a husband,” Anne came back at him through smiles. “I also have a son, and I was just going upstairs to look after him.”

“A thousand pardons.” Rodney bowed around the side of the chair; and after Anne had gone he amused himself by blowing rings of smoke ceilingward, while the firelight shone on his immobile face like the red glow of sunset on chiseled marble that shrines dead hopes.

Meantime, Anne had gone into Grenville’s

den at the head of the stairs to telephone, closing the door behind her. Five minutes passed before she could arouse Central, who came back with the disquieting information that on account of the storm, all telephonic communication with New York had been discontinued. But the delay would only be temporary.

Upon her return to the living room, she paused at the foot of the stairs to suppress a yawn.

Rodney must have had eyes in the back of his head, for he said very promptly: "I'm afraid our little country mouse grows sleepy."

Anne ignored the remark. Walking to the fireplace, she began to stir the embers under the logs with a brass-handled poker. She was feeling more tolerant now. Rodney was a bachelor, and, as such, he had probably been pampered by women, and could not help becoming peeved when they did not immediately respond to his wants.

There was a moment's silence. Then he remarked abruptly: "Did anyone ever by chance tell you that you are a beautiful woman?"

Anne turned swiftly, and for a brief moment her eyes blazed and there were ashen shadows

around her mouth. Her fingers clutched the poker tenaciously.

Rodney, flecking the ashes from his cigarette, laughed outright. "By Jove, it's the first time a pretty woman ever threatened to brain me with a poker for paying her a compliment."

Anne gave a long, drawn-out sigh, relaxed, and restored the poker to its place. "I'm sorry if I alarmed you," she said apologetically. "It wasn't the compliment. In fact, I wasn't thinking of you at all. I was thinking of men in general, and the world they create for their women to live in."

"I quite agree with you on that score," Rodney smiled cynically. "Most men are rotters."

"I'm not asking for sympathy," said Anne; adding: "I've read that wedded life even among savages is without a grain of love."

"I'm afraid I had a little glimpse of the savage in you," drawled Rodney, "as you stood there brandishing that poker like a tomahawk. Of course you didn't exactly brandish, but the idea was there. A charming picture, just the same—a savage in fire-gilt—the armed and panoplied Minerva, matching her prowess and wisdom against man's."

“I dare say I did look ridiculous.” She flushed sensitively as she sat down upon a ladder-back chair by the fireplace. “As a child I always walked with my head up,” she went on, “listening to the birds and looking at the treetops, like an Indian.”

“And as a woman you’re looking for the ideal in man,” Rodney interposed. “But you’ll never find it. As the little printer’s devil in my shop would say, ‘There ain’t no sich animal.’ ”

The rain was still beating against the window panes, and the wind sougning down the chimney.

“Still, every man has within himself the most profound reverence for what is highest in womanhood,” Rodney went on. “But reverence is weak and will not stand the test. Man is not strong enough to fight against the realities of his nature. That’s one reason I never married, and so saved some good woman like yourself the misery and humiliation in the knowledge that comes after marriage that a high moral state does not exist among men.”

Anne laughed lightly.

“I told that to a bunch of fashionable women the other day at the Metropolis Club,” Rodney resumed, “and they were horrified. I’ve been

getting some very rude notes from their husbands. But it pays to tell the truth."

"I suppose you find it increases the circulation of your weekly newspaper," Anne rejoined casually.

"Oh, the deep intuitiveness of woman!" Rodney groaned good-naturedly, trying out his stiff knee joints.

"Of course you're going to say some very nice things about Grenville during the coming campaign." Anne was manoeuvring.

Rodney glanced at her rather quizzically. Up to this moment he had not had the slightest intention of supporting Grenville. In fact, he was planning to say some very nasty things about this political upstart. But the potent argument of soft dark eyes and the sheen of hair overruled his fixed intentions.

"If he puts up a good fight for reform, the right sort of people will support him, I'm sure."

"That sounds promising," smiled Anne; and for the first time she let him catch the clear, full light of her eyes.

The clock struck the quarter hour, a reminder to Anne that she was expecting a telephone call. She rose, evincing some restlessness, a state of

mind that soon communicated itself to Rodney.

"You know, I don't like to hear clocks strike," he commented; "it depresses me."

Anne faced him squarely. "What about me?" she asked. "Here I am, my husband in town, the servants all asleep, trying to entertain a brilliant editor who has never taken the trouble to explain what really happened to bring him to my door at this hour of the morning."

"Oh, but I mean to explain everything to your husband," said Rodney; "everything perfectly unavoidable and easily explained."

"I'll save you the trouble of all that," Anne put in airily. "I've already put in my call, and he shall be told everything before I turn in for the night."

"Yes; of course." Rodney seemed to be floundering hopelessly.

"Grenville is a sticker on details, so I must know something of what happened," said Anne succinctly.

"Well, all I know is that the storm overtook us, and in taking a curve we skidded." Rodney rose as he spoke, punctuating his remark with a groan. "When the chauffeur fished me out of the motor car, it was hanging perilously over the



edge of a wooden bridge, and one wheel crushed. I sent him on to the village, and then found my way up here." At that moment there was a crunch of gravel outside, and the honk of a horn. "There he is now."

Anne followed Rodney into the hall. "I'm so glad you're coming to Grenville's little week-end party," she said; "and I hope you'll be quite recovered by then."

"You've been awfully nice to me, Mrs. Karley," said Rodney. "And so sweet of you to shoulder the responsibility of telling your husband." He gave a little sardonic grin. "I sha'n't say a word." He stopped short as Anne put her hand quickly and apologetically to her mouth to stifle another yawn.

He gazed at her in dismay, while the thought flashed through his mind: "Damn these good women!"

"Grenville would have been pained, I'm sure, if I had not extended our hospitality to one in distress."

"Then I'm not to mention it?"

"Why should you?" Anne, to further expedite his departure, handed him his hat.

Rodney glanced at her incredulously, and

with a very polite bow and renewed thanks, passed out into the wind-swept night. He had no sooner gone than the telephone bell rang.

“Well, who is it? Who is it?”

Anne recognized Honoria’s voice with a qualm. Why had Grenville not answered? She responded civilly, but with just a shade of defiant asperity in her voice.

“I’ve been in bed and asleep for the last two hours,” snapped Honoria. “Oh, it’s wicked of you to get me up.”

“Is it raining in town?” Anne fumbled.

“How ridiculous. How should I know whether it’s raining?”

“We’ve had a terrible storm down here, and—now I would like to speak with Grenville.”

“I wouldn’t think of disturbing him.”

“But it’s something he should know,” Anne persisted. “I want him to know before he comes home.”

With keen intuition the aunt sensed something out of the ordinary. Her voice changed as if by magic. “What is it, my dear?”

“It’s about a visitor—someone who came during the storm, and—he’s just gone.”

Honorias voice in reply dropped almost to a whisper. "Who was it?"

"Rodney Webb," Anne replied with perfect naiveté. "He was in a motor smashup, and stayed here over an hour."

"That's nothing to worry about."

"But I feel that Grenville should be told."

"And he shall be told, the first thing in the morning."

"Please," begged Anne. "Still, I would much prefer telling him myself."

"Much better to accept my intervention," Honorias suggested mildly. "I shall simply tell him the facts without advancing any opinion. And my advice would be to let him take the initiative in speaking of it. If he does question you, just say that you promised me to enter into no discussion."

Anne was silent for a moment—silent in the white heat of anger. And when she finally spoke there was no response.

Honorias had tactfully hung up.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WEEK-END PARTY

**R**ODNEY was standing by a table, thumbing his way casually through *Sporting Life*, although he kept looking expectantly towards the stairs; and when Anne did appear, what he saw was a figure as lithe and as alert as a black panther, a pair of slender, exquisitely moulded arms, bare to the shoulders, an uplifted oval face, the perfect curves of the slightly aquiline nose, the bow-shaped arc of scarlet lips.

Following close behind Anne were Grenville and Puggins, who had just finished a game of billiards. Anne paused at the bottom of the stairs, and as Grenville passed her, she linked her arm in his with quick and effective diplomacy. It was the chance of battle, and a brave woman does not count her foes. Thus they walked into the living room. The effect was rather electrical, especially on Iris.

Lady Dawkins raised a hand from the depths of a Queen Anne chair, in which she had been almost lost to view, being a very slight and fragile old lady, and drawing Anne down to whispering distance, said: "My dear, don't you know it's very unfashionable to show affection for one's husband?" Then she tittered behind her lace fan.

Naturally the conversation between the men drifted into politics. They were discussing Grenville's rival for the Senate. "All sorts of lies are being published about de Peyster," Puggins was saying, "about his home life, his happy domesticity, when in reality he's nothing but a fancier, dog or chicken, I can't remember which." He turned to Rodney. "Seems to me I read something to that effect in your publication to-day."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Rodney lightly.

"No doubt but that the pen is mightier than the bass drum in politics," Grenville remarked; adding, with a glance at Rodney: "What I thoroughly dislike is the dishonest partisan policy of some of our newspapers."

"In other words," returned Rodney coldly, "you don't mind political mud-throwing so long

as there are no sharp-pointed stones, or truths, concealed in the mud?"

"I hate lying and cheating in any form," snapped Grenville.

Puggins, meanwhile, had been standing in a deep quandary. Suddenly he snapped his fingers and said: "I have it now."

"Please don't keep us in suspense," Rodney put in a little sarcastically.

"I'm afraid my memory is going like my teeth and my hair," rejoined Puggins. "But I've just recalled the paragraph in question, and it was in *Truth*. I read it on the train, and it was to this effect, that John de Peyster was a dog fancier and Grenville Karley a chicken fancier, and—and the voters could take their choice. Rather pointed, eh?" He gave Grenville a gentle jab in the ribs.

Grenville's face for a moment was an expressionless mask.

"A little nonsense now and then should be relished by the best of politicians," said Rodney by way of amends.

Grenville met his gaze unflinchingly. "So that's your estimate of me?"

Puggins realized that he had put his foot in it.

Then Rodney spoke. "As a matter of fact, Mr. Karley, I tried to have that particular paragraph 'killed,' but when I got in touch with my office, the weekly had gone to press."

"What caused you to change your mind?" asked Puggins doggedly. He strongly disliked the man, but had tact enough to conceal it.

"A woman's prerogative, perhaps," returned Rodney. Then he turned squarely on Grenville. "It was only yesterday that I decided to support your candidacy. If I had not, I certainly would not have accepted your hospitality. I believe of the two candidates, you are the best fitted to represent the people. A man who is a good husband and a loving father has much more to recommend him than one who has devoted his life principally to poodles."

Grenville felt the sting of the barbed sally, but he passed it off with a polite: "Thanks, very much." It was the veiled insinuation of his moral looseness that hurt him most. Pampered all his life, he had no capacity to take punishment. Had Rodney been prying into his private affairs?

The announcement that dinner was served came like oil on troubled waters, but the tenseness of the situation was not wholly spent.

Puggins assisted Lady Dawkins to rise from her deep-seated chair. Rodney walked to Anne's side, who nodded amiably when he offered his arm.

"You are radiant, wonderful, to-night," he said quietly. "And to my great surprise you seem to be in love with that errant husband of yours. He doesn't seem to mind a bit what happened last night, or rather this morning." He gazed at her slantwise, and questioningly, but Anne passed it off lightly. "My husband is my least trouble," she said. "He never asks questions, and we never have scenes."

The dinner proceeded informally. Rodney managed to tell Anne of her husband's pique over the stinging paragraph in *Truth*, his attempt to have it "killed," and why.

"My chance meeting with you caused me to change my mind," he said. "I realized that in wounding your husband's feelings I would injure you—perhaps shatter your illusions, the illusions of a woman who loves most, and is controlled absolutely by one who loves least. Kindly accept my apologies."

Anne smiled. "I feel I can count on you now to help Grenville. Really he has a wonderful



side to his character. We'll talk it over on the sly. I'm determined to make good in this, and I have some data to give you to be used for his political benefit."

While the party was having coffee after dinner in the living room, Puggins took a turn at the player-piano. Anne was having a little heart-to-heart talk with the dowager lady.

"I remember having my fortune told when I was a young girl," she was saying, "and the fact was disclosed that I would be very rich or very poor, and very happy or very unhappy. There was to be no medium in my destiny."

"We are all fated and cannot avoid what happens," rejoined Lady Dawkins.

"The fortune-teller also said that I was marked by fate for adventure—that I could never accept ordinary life as my share."

"Oh, that's poppycock, my dear," smiled the dowager. "Everyday life is an adventure. Mere living, a risk."

"But I do want to live—to live!" Anne clasped her hands together as if making a passionate entreaty to Fate. "Anything to break the monotony of the average sort of life, which

I thought my marriage would do; but it has not. The flash of a pistol, a dagger, anything to break up the commonplace level of the neglected wife at home—a fire, an airplane falling from the skies, a thunderbolt—anything would do!”

“You are not easily satisfied, I’m afraid,” remarked Lady Dawkins, rather aghast at the outbreak. “And for pity’s sake, don’t let Grenville hear you go on like this. Sounds very much like a wife shrieking for freedom.”

Anne’s face softened in expression. She glanced over at Puggins at the piano. “Grieg’s music always affects me that way,” she faltered. “The first time I went to the opera I never slept a wink the whole night. It was ‘L’Amore dei Tre Re.’ You remember the old blind father who strangles his daughter-in-law?”

“I never go to the opera for that very reason,” rejoined the dowager lady; “they do such terrible things. Nor to the films, where all they do is shoot and kill. So I stay at home, and knit.”

“How I envy your contentment,” Anne sighed.

“It comes only with age,” Lady Dawkins purred, picking up a lost stitch. Then she grew

quite confidential. "You know, I was just like you at your age. Six months after my marriage to Dawkins I was bored to death. Once, while we were at Eastbourne, a wicked thought came into my mind: to push him off the cliff, and run away with a handsome young East Indian Prince who had been flirting with me at the hotel."

"But you didn't?" laughed Anne.

"No; we strolled down to the pavilion for tea, and I contented myself by picking up little round pebbles and throwing them at poor Dawkins."

By this time the men had returned from the terrace; and somehow the conversation drifted off toward psychic phenomena.

Rodney, who delved in psychology in many of his writings and lectures, led off with the declaration that out of the remnants of witchcraft and black art, scientific psychical research was proving conclusively that a large percentage of the manifestations formerly attributed to supernatural agencies, was due to perfectly natural laws and causes.

"We all radiate untold power," he said; "even

our will is physical energy and exerts a definite strength, just as light waves do."

"I read only recently," said Iris, "that the human will is fearful and strong enough to move mountains. It can be registered and weighed like dynamite."

"Quite so," Rodney agreed. "Indeed, it has been proved that some of the great crimes are psychological crimes; that is, a man commits a crime without realizing what he is doing, under the force of another man's will. This is the black magic of hypnotism, which can be operated either for good or for evil."

Then Anne spoke. "Dr. Jex, my good friend and physician, has always insisted that I possess a psychic temperament. He often says in jest that subconsciously I'm an Indian, having inherited the strain from the passionate love my father had for his first wife, a young Indian woman." She paused. Iris was listening with cynical tolerance, and Grenville was in a state of ennui. "Perhaps I'm boring you," she added.

"Do go on," urged Lady Dawkins; "although I've heard that foolish Indian yarn before."

Anne smiled, and continued. "Well, to prove that I am a fit subject for this hypnosis state,

as Mr. Webb calls it, I'll tell you how I was placed under the absolute control of a man at Newburyport. One night the local Y. M. C. A. staged an entertainment for the war relief workers. A hypnotist was on the program, a mountebank I thought him to be. But he got me under his control, and as long as it lasted I was the hit of the show, serving sandwiches and coffee to an empty row of chairs, and so on. I was furious, of course, when I came out of the spell, and somehow I couldn't get the man out of my mind. That was before I met Grenville."

"Let's hope *he* doesn't prey on your mind," Puggins bleated.

"Never, never," laughed Anne. The opportunity had come to declare herself, and she did it graciously, but boldly. "I'm really the most contented woman in the world," she declared impulsively. "I have a wonderful husband, everything a woman wants." Her voice rang musically, but at the finish it seemed to twang like a stretched string, keyed up to the breaking point.

An awkward silence ensued. Rodney was the first to break it. "What was that you started to tell me at dinner, about a strange young

woman at St. Jude's, on the day of your marriage?"

"More silly rot," Grenville broke in; "months, years, have passed, and yet Mrs. Karley keeps harping on a particular face she saw in the crowd that day."

"I'll never forget it as long as I live," said Anne wistfully. "I can't describe the young woman, except that I felt that she resembled me greatly. She was my physical double, if there is such a thing. But she seemed to understand me as no one else did that day. Sometimes, in the night, I can see her black, piercing eyes."

"Can one imagine such rubbish?" Grenville commented cynically.

"Oh, but Mrs. Karley is quite right," spoke up Rodney. "It was no doubt one of those rare instances of natural attunement between two complete strangers. All of us have our physical and our spiritual doubles. Sometimes they follow us around like our shadow. In children's story books they are called angels of mercy. In the New Scriptures we read of the Good Samaritan. Along the highway of life, in the crowd, there's always somebody who will give us a lift, or guard, even defend us against danger."

“How thrilling,” remarked Lady Dawkins. Turning to Anne, she said: “Wouldn’t it be exciting to run across your double again some day?”

“Stranger things have happened,” spoke up Rodney. “We are just beginning to scratch the surface of the unknown.”

General conversation ceased. Anne went up to the nursery after saying: “I’m sure I heard Gwennie calling me. I have this premonition, sometimes when fast asleep.”

“She thinks she does,” Grenville added with a sardonic smile after she had gone upstairs.

“A mother’s instinct, and perfectly natural,” remarked Lady Dawkins, who realized now that the breach between husband and wife was growing wider and wider; and her sympathy was with Anne.

Upstairs Anne was having it out with herself. Had she really saved the day for herself? She doubted one moment, and hoped passionately the next. As man and wife she and Grenville were one, and yet they were worlds apart. One half of anything could not go on living by itself.

Around eleven o’clock the opportunity seemed ripe for Anne to place in Rodney’s keeping, and

on the quiet, some political literature she felt certain would further Grenville's chances for election. The document, in her husband's own handwriting, was titled "The Fight for Political Reform." She thought it very clever, although for some unexplained reason Grenville had pigeon-holed it.

She had read the article through several times since its inception, and knew it by the robin's egg blue paper cover. But she did not know that Grenville, immediately after his arrival that afternoon, had removed the document, and had heedlessly left another in its place, also with a robin's egg blue cover.

And it was this latter substitute document that she handed to Rodney after she had located him on the terrace by the fire of his cigarette. She was so sure that it was the right one that she had not even taken the trouble to confirm it.

"This will be our little secret," she said as Rodney pocketed the manuscript without even glancing at it. "I'm sure Grenville has forgotten all about it, and he will be so surprised when he sees it in print. I feel confident it will win him many votes."

"I must say, I admire you for your unshaken



adherence to a cause, your faith in the future," said Rodney.

"The future belongs to our son," responded Anne seriously, "and I want to prepare the way for him. In helping Grenville in his ambitions to become something more than a rich idler, I feel that Gwennie, when he grows up, will reap the benefit. If you must know, I consider my son my first duty. And I must look ahead."

Anne paused, suppressing a smile.

"What's the joke?" asked Rodney.

"Your shadow on the window blind," returned Anne, "struck me as being very funny. Just as you are standing now, it looks exactly like Punchinello."

They were standing by a low French window, partly closed, and in the light of an electric wrought-iron lantern on the terrace wall, Rodney's profile showed grotesque upon the white blind.

"I hope you don't mind," said Anne in an apologetic tone. So saying, she lifted her arm and produced upon the blind the graceful shadow of a long-necked goose, which took a snip at the elongated shadow of Rodney's nose.

"What a child you are!" he murmured.

"Please don't scold me," she returned gayly; then she became as suddenly serious. "You will publish that manuscript, won't you? And you will continue to say nice things about Grenville?"

Rodney shrugged his shoulders. "Anything for the good of the cause," he replied, rather enigmatically.

They parted. Rodney went for a turn in the garden, while Anne stole away quietly to her room. No sooner had she passed upstairs when Lady Dawkins rose suddenly from the depths of the Queen Anne chair. Peterson was just entering the living room.

"I must have fallen asleep," said the dowager lady with a nervous glance towards the terrace. And as she walked towards the hall, she continued: "I'm afraid I'm in for one of my sleepless nights."

"Perhaps it's the weather, milady," ventured Peterson, cringing. "Surprising weather we're having. Hot one day, and cold the next."

"Very surprising things happen these days," Lady Dawkins pronounced dreamily as she started upstairs, slowly, step by step; "very surprising!"

As a matter of truth, Lady Dawkins had not been asleep in the chair; at least, not for the last quarter of an hour. She had seen enough through the window that opened on the terrace to make her intensely curious to know more. Being a woman of the world and of wide experience, her suspicions were at once aroused.

## CHAPTER V

### A GILDED LIE

**B**ROOKSIDE was one of those terribly fashionable country clubs, and it was old enough to have traditions. There the same families come and go, year in and year out. It is as if a play had been going on for many years without a change in the cast; and like all smart clubs, it was a perfect piece of artificiality.

As a member of the club's polo contingent, Grenville was in for a strenuous afternoon at the practise games, staged on Saturday afternoons for the entertainment of the club members and their guests. Accompanied by Iris, he had driven to the club in his twin-six roadster shortly after luncheon. The rest of the party tagged behind in the limousine.

Lady Dawkins and Puggins occupied the comfortable rear seat while Anne and Rodney sat on the little uncomfortable seats in front, and facing each other. The seating arrangement

afforded Lady Dawkins plenty of opportunity to watch them, and to see if their knees touched. But the two seemed immovable as plaster cast figures, and greatly to their discredit, for the dowager lady felt sure now they were suppressing something. Anne kept looking ahead as the motor car sped onward; and just now was looking over Rodney's shoulder, and commenting enthusiastically, as they flew past a dairy farm, on what a pretty picture the cows made standing knee-deep in a pond.

"I'm afraid you'll never grow up, my dear," sighed Lady Dawkins. "It would not surprise me in the least to hear you say, 'See cow!' or 'See horse!'"

"It's Gwennie who has kept me young," smiled Anne in return. "So much of the time I have no one to talk to except him. It's a wonder I speak grown-up sense at all."

Her thoughts seemed to travel with the motor car. She wondered what was around the corner. How much longer could this cold protection without love keep up? Suppose that all this luxury of living should fade away; suppose that the wolf should come and sit at her door? All about her was the silver and sapphire of a sun-swept world,

yet she knew that black night was just below the horizon. She shuddered.

When they reached the club enclosure, the game had begun. The gathering was purely informal.

Among the first to welcome Anne was Dr. Jex, a rosy-cheeked, white-haired man of advanced years, who enjoyed a large and fashionable following. He had the cast of a patriarch, and fairly radiated good cheer and optimism; there was something paternal about him to Anne, something old-fashioned and substantial that put him above and apart from the cold and superficial members of his set, in which she always felt herself a stranger. He was not only her physician, but her friend; in his presence she felt unmasked and unashamed.

They had tea together on the porch of the clubhouse during the second period. Grenville was in splendid form, his hitting accurate and his long drives spectacular; his rooters were looking to him to save his side from defeat.

Somehow the subject of divorce came up, and Anne was surprised to hear the doctor say that the average man's devotion to his wife rarely

fails until the wife fails in her devotion, a fact proved by statistics.

“But there must be exceptions to the rule,” she said, glad of the chance to sound the doctor.

“There are exceptions,” returned Dr. Jex; “one is known as sex antagonism.” He paused. “Shall I go on?”

“Please do.”

Dr. Jex often prescribed candy-coated pills, and he seized the opportunity now to disguise in a pleasant nectar of words what he really thought was the matter with Grenville. “This antagonism is the most common cause of marital unhappiness and divorce in society,” he explained, “although it rarely becomes a matter of court record, for it is too elusive and indefinite. It emanates from overbreeding, which creates supersensitiveness.”

Anne was curious to know more. “How can any woman be sure she is in love with her husband?” she asked.

“Does any woman ever know her own mind?” he inquired with a smile. He was a shrewd analyst of women, and had long admired Anne’s honesty and fidelity; his personal interest in her was tinged with deep sympathy.

Anne regarded him curiously, and then she said: "I know this much: I made an agreement and I mean to stick to it."

"A woman loyal to her marriage vows in the face of unfulfilment, to my mind, is one of the most sanctified things on earth," the doctor declared impulsively. "Many women in society are living this gilded lie."

"What can a woman do?" Anne's lips quivered as she spoke.

"Trust to your instinct," was the ready response, "and some day you will find yourself."

"I've never been my true self as long back as I can remember," said Anne. "I often feel that down deep inside of me is an entirely distinct and separate person."

"You have a pronounced psychic temperament," said the doctor, "and you possess two beings, conscious and subconscious, very distinct from each other. I must warn you against any undue influence, and, please, do not accept suggestions from strangers. They might prove hurtful."

"I've always dreamed of—of love that was savage," Anne confessed without a qualm.

"Too bad you are kept housed up at Meadow-



mere," the doctor remarked; "you should have a safety valve."

"Oh, but I have." And she told him of her plans to help Grenville during the coming campaign. Incidentally, she spoke of her friendship with Rodney; and how she meant to use him.

Dr. Jex knew of Rodney's reputation, so he said lightly: "Beware of new and untried influences."

Anne flashed back a smile. "Not an influence really; just a means to an end." But she did not go into details, and said nothing in regard to her little conspiracy with Rodney about the publication of the document she had given him secretly.

"You may win Grenville back after all," the doctor commented hopefully. "He may not be such a cad as I think. I'll give him the benefit of the doubt, at any rate. Too bad I shan't be here to watch the victorious results at the polls and at Meadowmere."

Just then the sun passed under a cloud. "You're not going to leave us?" Anne's lips trembled. "What will become of Gwennie?"

Dr. Jex broke the news gently. He was to take his first real vacation in ten years, and bury himself in some quiet spot in Europe for six

months or more. As a widower, he had no home ties, and as a physician of sixty odd years, he felt he owed it to himself and for the prolongation of his life, to cut himself off entirely from everything. As for Gwennie, he considered the child on the way to complete recovery, and his case would be transferred to capable hands.

"I know I'm selfish," said Anne; "and I shouldn't really be unhappy with this wonderful possession, a son. If Gwennie only had his health, I could live in a hovel with only a rag to my back, and be perfectly contented."

"And it's this beautiful mother love that will see him through," the doctor declared.

At this juncture, Lady Dawkins, walking with a cane, broke away from the companionship of Rodney and Puggins, and came over to the tea table.

"You don't mean to tell me, my dear, that you've been calmly sipping tea with Dr. Jex while everybody has been going simply wild over Grenville? He really won the game."

Anne glanced around helplessly when Dr. Jex came to her rescue, suggesting that she had better run along and meet her husband. By this time, Grenville was approaching the clubhouse,

surrounded by a coterie of admirers. Anne broke through the ranks. "I'm so glad," she said; and took hold of his arm.

A few moments later, as they were assembled upon the porch, Anne proposed a toast. When Lady Dawkins gave her a despairing look, she knew she had bungled. Still, glasses were raised. Iris alone refused to respond.

"It's absolutely silly." Iris turned on her heel and walked off.

After the little group had melted away, Anne handed Grenville a second glass of cooling punch. He drained it at a gulp for his throat was parched. Then he said, under his breath: "Why make a fool of yourself?"

Anne felt the sting of his remark, but she did not resent it. Grenville went on: "Everybody knows that you haven't been paying the slightest attention to the game. While Miss Sanderson and the others were rooting for me, you were sitting here gossiping with that old geezer," indicating Dr. Jex. "One can't blame her for walking away. You've been acting in extremely bad taste, if I must say it."

Iris strolled up languidly. Anne advanced

quickly to her side. "Please don't think me a simpleton," she said earnestly.

Iris shrugged her shoulders. "Perhaps I'm the one who made a fool of herself?" She glanced over at Grenville. "Just so I did not embarrass your husband."

"Oh, let's forget it," said Grenville petulantly.

Anne did not seem to mind as much as she thought she would. Was she, too, lapsing into indifference? Often she had watched a live ember leap out of the fireplace and lie on the hearthstone, until it became cold and lifeless.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BREATH OF SUSPICION

**I**T was a night such as romancers would have made to order. The air was charged with the scents of early autumnal flowers. A huge moon was rising, exactly as if in response to an order; and the sea, under the moonlight, began its dance of shimmering silver.

Lady Dawkins and Puggins occupied a stone bench on the east terrace overlooking the garden. The light from the open door fell in a silvery pool at their feet.

“You know we are both too old to enjoy sitting in the moonlight,” said the dowager lady finally.

“It’s a crime to grow old,” returned Puggins with a saucy air.

Lady Dawkins sighed heavily. “To think that we once wandered in a beautiful garden like this, in the pale moonlight, and all the world a rosy dream. Ah, me!” Then she added, teas-

ingly: "Do you remember when you kissed me behind the rosebush, and against my will? I do believe you would do it again—if you had the chance."

"By Gad, I would," declared Puggins impulsively, just as a twinge of lumbago caught him in the small of the back, and he groaned.

The dowager lady kept glancing suspiciously down into the garden. They could hear voices.

Puggins glanced at her quizzically. "Tell me, what's up," he whispered coaxingly.

"I suspect everything, yet I know nothing," was Lady Dawkins's enigmatic response.

"Has it gone so far as that?" Puggins inquired in surprise, stroking his chin.

Lady Dawkins leaned over. "I will tell you this much," she said in a confidential tone.

"Well," Puggins urged expectantly.

"Everything is crinkum-crankum!" With this sally, Lady Dawkins rose, and walked into the house, Puggins following sheepishly behind her.

Anne and Rodney had paired off under the pergola, while Iris had joined Grenville for a turn round the garden pool. By this time, Rodney's uncanny intuitiveness had pierced the mask of the chaste enchantress, Iris. He glanced at

the unsuspecting wife, the beauty of whose upturned face seemed somehow to share in the barbaric wonder and romance of the moonlight. To him there was romance only in the woman unwon.

Unwittingly Anne had placed in his hands the strongest instrument he could ever hope to find for striking out her mushroom politician. Evidently by mistake, she had given him the wrong document. It was in Grenville's handwriting, and contained a lurid description of his personal encounter with vice in New York; if published, it would not only compromise him, but blast his political and social career.

For the complete fruition of Rodney's plans it would be necessary for him to leave Meadowmere as the avowed enemy of his host; and the sooner, the better. Still he must needs await the turn of chance. Sufficient to the hour was the enthralling nearness of the woman desired, who, to all intents, had forgotten his presence in rapt admiration for the moon.

"Mooning, eh?" Rodney gave a little chuckle as he spoke.

Anne came back to earth. "I must have been a thousand miles away in thought," she said. And when she turned upon Rodney she gave a

perceptible start. In the vagueness of moonshine and shadow, his sleek evening dress had taken on a strange lustre; his long tapering fingers, white as wax against the black, the semblance of claws. The shadow of a vine swaying in the breeze seemed to distort his face.

“Oh, I say!” Rodney protested, shifting his position.

“Please don’t mind,” said Anne, “but in the dim lights and shadows, and the way you were sitting, you reminded me of Mephistopheles—the one I saw at the opera.”

“Well, I like that,” Rodney commented sourly.

“Oh, but I admire the devil,” Anne added swiftly; “not that I approve of his mission in this world, or his enmity to God, but his cleverness, his ingenuousness. Just imagine, a being, as supreme in evil as God is supreme in goodness. Here, there, everywhere—mischievously energetic, the tempter of mankind.”

Anne’s guilelessness struck Rodney as being almost ludicrous; and her amazing logic about the devil affected him like a dash of cold water in his face. He rose and suggested a turn round the arbor. She linked her arm in his, which made



him feel that he was actually in the devil's boots and walking with a saint. At the same time, he realized that evil had not as yet entered into her personal experience; or if it had, it had not been powerful enough to imprint itself upon the sensitized plate of her senses. Inwardly he felt grieved that all this passionate moonlight was going to waste.

The fact that he still limped slightly caused Anne to resurrect the subject of his after midnight visit. When he pressed her as to what Grenville had said, she laughingly responded that everything had been explained to her husband's complete satisfaction.

"What perfect felicity to dwell in a household where no questions are asked and no objections raised on such trivialities," Rodney remarked.

Anne replied: "It is my nature to travel along the lines of least resistance. Although I often act on the spur of the moment, I dislike being questioned as to the sincerity of my motive."

"That's easily explained," said Rodney with a sardonic grin: "Every woman thinks she's dead right in everything she undertakes when often she knows she's dead wrong."

"At any rate, it will explain why I gave you

that document without first seeking Grenville's permission," returned Anne. "Perhaps I was rash, or overzealous, which should make you all the more agreeable to use it to the best advantage."

"I've only glanced through it hastily." Rodney thought best to let it go at that.

"I'm sure you won't fail me," said Anne; "no matter what happens."

Rodney glanced at her inquiringly. "What could possibly happen?"

"Nothing definite that I know of," replied Anne; "but I always have a dread in my heart of what is around the corner. My faith in everything and everybody is so sincere I fear to have it broken. I dread having my dreams despoiled. I have closed my eyes to the suffering I have already endured, so my optimism persists. Still, some day, I shall have to come face to face with what is just around the corner."

"You may be very much surprised to find real happiness just around the corner," Rodney declared with warmth. "Every woman has the right to live her own life—to love——"

"Oh, there you are!"

The voice of Lady Dawkins broke in abruptly.

She was standing at the edge of the terrace, a scarf thrown over her head; had been there for several moments, watching Anne and Rodney as they strolled slowly up the path from the arbor, and straining both ears.

“I couldn’t imagine what had become of you,” she said to Anne as they crossed the terrace. “Iris went to her room long ago with a splitting headache. Puggins has been asleep in his chair for the last half hour, and Grenville has gone to bed, utterly fagged out, he said, after the game.”

The dowager’s little glance of suspicion in his direction did not escape Rodney, and he welcomed it. When, finally, he entered the house, he found everybody apparently had gone to bed. Peterson was rummaging through a drawer in the living room.

“I’m looking for a deck of cards, sir,” the butler explained. “Mr. Karley always keeps a pack in this reading table, but they have disappeared. Lady Dawkins was asking for them this evening.”

“I can loan you a deck,” Rodney offered.

“If you would be so kind, sir,” returned Peterson. “I’ve looked everywhere for one.”

Rodney slipped quietly upstairs to his room.

and was back before the butler had finished closing up for the night. "I always carry an extra deck," he said as he handed the cards to Peterson. "You needn't bother about returning them."

"Thanks very much, sir."

Rodney was halfway up the stairs when he turned and said: "Oh, Peterson!" As the butler came to the foot of the stairs, he continued, in a lowered tone: "Not necessary to mention where you got them."

"I shan't say a word, sir," returned the butler, "for it gets me out of a hole. Lady Dawkins insisted that one of the servants——"

"Good night," Rodney interposed airily.

An hour later and the big house stood strangely still, in the ghostly stillness of moonlight. But sleep had not come to Grenville. He was living through again and again that brief but passionate quarter of an hour spent in the garden, alone with Iris, when she seemed suddenly transformed from the coldness of marble into the pulsing of life. In moonlight madness they had reached the fuller and deeper understanding that comes with enfolding arms and the touch of hot lips. The hopelessness of their love had not dimmed

that momentary flash, yet both were cognizant of the obstacles in their path to ultimate fulfilment. But the woman, dominant in passion, knew a way out. So Iris had spilled a drop of poison in Grenville's ear—suspicion.

Sunday was never a bore to Anne. Regularly she attended services in the little picturesque church on the outskirts of the nearby village; it seemed to break up the monotony of her loneliness at Meadowmere. She had a nodding acquaintance with most of the gentry who attended, and a smile for the village folk. Upon this particular Sunday, Lady Dawkins and Puggins accompanied her, and at their own volition.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened. After service Puggins took a little walk while the dowager lady discussed the weather and politics with the heads of various families. Puggins, it seems, had a mania for visiting cemeteries, and took delight in reading epitaphs. On the way home, he kept harping on several unique ones he had found, until Lady Dawkins lost her patience, and called him a morbid old fool. And when she asked him point blank whether he went to church to listen to the sermon and to pray, or to count

the tombstones and read epitaphs, he became red in the face, and refused to answer.

Anne rushed to the dear man's relief. "Of course, we both go to church to pray," she remarked smilingly.

"I trust you pray not to be led into temptation," Lady Dawkins returned rather abruptly.

Anne laughed. "There's only one thing I'm afraid of, and that's the black of night."

"I'm sure there's more danger in moonlight nights, my dear."

The dowager lady's remark had a barbed point, but Anne did not feel the thrust. She was cheerful for the rest of the day. Her spirits lagged a bit after dinner, so she joined Puggins on the terrace. He was a delightfully simple soul after all, and his witticisms acted as a sort of tonic.

A game of cards was in progress in the living room. Anne could see from where she sat that the players were fast becoming reckless and excited.

Lady Dawkins, who had often tried her luck at Monte Carlo, showed her age by a certain fussiness at cards. When she took a trick she would cackle like a parrot; but when she lost,

she would snap at the others like an irritated magpie.

The game had now reached a hundred dollar limit. Grenville was a plunger, and was fast raking in the golden shekels, while Iris took her luck with cold-blooded indifference. Rodney, unemotional, was playing a losing game.

By this time, their voices had grown rather excited. Anne's curiosity was aroused, so she rose and walked over to the low French window. She remained there, unnoticed by the players. The room was darkened, except for the bright glow of the swinging lamp, which illumined the faces of the four at the table. Grenville sat facing her. She noticed the deep, frowning lines upon his forehead, and a peculiar smirk around the corners of his mouth. Rodney wore what appeared to be a heartless smile; and he seemed to be winning now, hand over fist.

The stakes were mounting higher and higher. Rodney was winning systematically. He would glance across at Grenville now and then with cynical eyes. The nerves of the players had reached the straining point. Then came the decisive stroke. Grenville lost a cool one thousand. Rodney cleaned up everything, raked it in, with

a last card—the card of chance. He leaned back in his chair and gave a sneering laugh.

At that instant Grenville shot up from his chair. Snatching a handful of cards he flung them scattering upon the table before Rodney, and leaning over, exclaimed: "Cheat!" He threw the accusation with eyes that flashed and lips that seemed to hiss.

Lady Dawkins and Iris rose simultaneously, horrified, while Anne hurriedly entered the room. She paused midway between the window and the table. She expected to see Rodney rise in heated protest against the insult, but he remained seated, calmly twiddling the end of his moustache. A brief silence, and then he spoke. Glancing up at Grenville, he said lightly: "Prove it!"

Grenville seized the challenge. Picking up several cards he advanced towards Anne. "Where did these cards come from?" he demanded.

Anne glanced at them hastily. "I never saw them before," she faltered.

Then Lady Dawkins spoke. "Why, I got them from Peterson."

Grenville forthwith rang for the butler, who



approached the table in fawning obeisance. "Where did you get these cards, Peterson?" he inquired.

For a moment there was no flicker of response upon the butler's face. Then he said: "I got them from Mr. Webb, sir."

"Under what circumstances?"

Peterson cleared his throat, then glanced appealingly at Lady Dawkins, who said at once: "When I asked Peterson last evening for the cards, he said there was only one deck left in the house, and that was missing."

"And so they were, milady," put in the butler. "It was later in the evening, after you'd all retired, while I was searching for them, that Mr. Webb very kindly offered to give me his traveling deck, as he called it."

Silence ensued until the butler had left the room. Grenville broke it after close examination of one of the cards under the lamp. "Marked cards, just as I thought," he said; "marked by various shadings of the fleur-de-lis design at each of the four corners."

Rodney remained silent.

Anne came up to Grenville. "Please—don't!" she begged.

He shook her hand from his arm. "This is my affair," he almost shouted. Then he turned squarely upon Rodney with hate made more bitter by the breath of suspicion. "Well, what have you got to say for yourself?"

Rodney met his gaze unflinchingly, shrugged his shoulders, then rose from his chair. "Prove it!" he reiterated.

Anne made another plea. "Grenville—please!"

"Mrs. Karley is quite right," Lady Dawkins declared. "How can you prove that Mr. Webb knew these cards were marked?"

Then Iris joined in, taking Grenville's part. "Mr. Webb supplied the cards, he suggested the game, and he's broken all of us."

"At least you might try to clear yourself," Lady Dawkins snorted at Rodney.

"I've nothing to say in the matter," Rodney returned simply.

Thereupon Grenville turned upon Anne, who stood with deep, beseeching eyes. "Either this man leaves the house at once, or I'll go myself!" he exclaimed. "You can take your choice."

The effect upon Anne was like a thunderbolt.

She gazed first at one, and then at the other, helplessly.

“Surely a man is master in his own house,” Iris intervened.

Anne felt the floor go from under her feet while her little castle of hope tumbled into a heap; her pleasant little intrigue with Rodney had been smashed. She blamed him for not protesting against the accusation. But why should she be drawn into it? The conviction settled upon her that Grenville was trying to shift the responsibility to her own shoulders. Summoning all her latent courage, and looking steadily into his eyes, she said: “It’s your affair, not mine.” Then she relaxed, sighing.

Grenville, taken unawares by Anne’s little fling at defiance, turned to Rodney. “There’s a train leaving for New York at eleven o’clock,” he advised, coolly.

Rodney took the hint amiably, and departed without any fuss.

Grenville, after the smoke had cleared away, realized to his chagrin that he had gained nothing. He had really proved nothing against Rodney, and it still remained his affair, not Anne’s.

## CHAPTER VII

### AROUND THE CORNER

**A**NNE had come to town, bringing Gwen-  
nie, whose improvement in health had  
been rapid; and they were staying at  
Honorias. The State political campaign was in  
full swing, and election day not far off. But she  
found it rather difficult to sit with folded hands  
amid so much hurrah. Her several attempts to  
share the excitement, if not the responsibilities,  
had brought the aunt's foot down hard. So she  
had lapsed into the old channel of least resistance,  
yet with an ever growing sense of injustice.

As the day drew nearer, she became less  
tractable, and began to show stubborn resistance  
to being tied down while Honorias and Iris were  
having their fling at campaigning. The tyranny  
of the aunt finally became unbearable. Added  
to this, was her first knowledge that Grenville  
had a town house of his own on Park Avenue,

which he had leased shortly after their marriage; the home in town that had been denied her.

The stretched string snapped at last. "I refuse to remain another day<sup>s</sup> in your Aunt's house," she said to Grenville; "it's stifling me."

Dinner was just over, and Grenville was preparing to hurry off upon a whirlwind tour of the city. They stood facing each other in the living-room, with its oak paneled walls, antique Louis XVI furniture, and soft lighting tones of blue and red.

The excited tone of her voice brought Honoria quickly upon the scene. She arrived in time to hear Anne's concluding remark: "I simply can't go on in this way—I can't!" It was her first rebellious note. Grenville gave his aunt a despairing side glance, which was a cue to this able tactician of the drawing-room to use her wits to save them both from the humiliation of the truth.

"Don't you think we should be very considerate of Grenville at this time?" Honoria began, purring.

"Considerate?" Anne returned swiftly. "I'm afraid he doesn't know the meaning of the word."

"That's a little far fetched, Anne," Grenville put in.

"It's a wonder to me that he has time for anything these exciting days," declared Honoria. "I'm sure you misjudge him."

"Well, if I do, it's his fault, not mine," returned Anne. "It isn't right that I should have to plead for the liberty, the rights, that are mine."

"What do you mean, my dear?" asked the aunt.

"Oh, she's got it into her head that she should take an active part with me in the campaign," Grenville broke in before Anne could reply.

Honoria feigned the deepest surprise. "I never dreamed of such a thing," she said.

"You will let me help you?" Anne turned appealingly toward Grenville.

"But you're rendering him the greatest service by remaining quietly at home," Honoria resumed. "That's the keynote of his whole campaign—wife and baby at home."

Anne insisted, and finally won her point. Fireworks were blazing against a blue-black sky, and bands playing, when they arrived at Mechanics' Hall in the Bronx. Anne was strangely excited. She was idealizing Grenville's political effort; as a man and a husband, he had lost all imaginative treatment in her mind.

Grenville was heckled by the crowd all through

his speech, and at the end, Anne was keenly disappointed. He had not thundered as the aunt had led her to expect, and he was far from resourceful in oratory. The band started up a lively air as he left the platform, and there was wild acclaim on the part of the audience, which Grenville proudly acknowledged, while Honoria beamed with a feeling of elation. But Anne saw through it all in a flash. Both Grenville and his aunt were blind in the arrogant opinion of themselves. He was unpopular with the crowd.

The same stinging pain of discovery came to her at the open air meeting in Rutgers Park, on the lower East Side, a section of the city very strange to her.

Was this sleek, fashionably attired man on the platform an ally to be solicited, or an enemy to attack? That is what Anne read in the upturned faces.

“We, the representatives of the people, plant and work that you may reap.” Grenville’s voice rang out clarionlike.

Then came the first challenge from the crowd. “No,” a man’s voice called out. “No; the poor man plants and works that the rich may reap.” This was followed by a deep acclamation from all sides.

Grenville stood unmoved, with an air of listless unconcern. He started to speak again, but the throng booed him down. He showed signs of impatience, which added enmity to insult. "Go back to Fifth Avenue where you belong!" someone shouted. Then he made the mistake of shaking his fist at the unruly ones. The protest came in the form of a brick hurtling from the outskirts of the throng. It missed Grenville by a hair's breadth; and instead of standing his ground, and trying to pacify the people, he made a move for a safe retreat. His blunder started a near riot.

Once out of the zone of peril, Grenville dismissed the incident lightly. What seemed to worry him most was that he had lost a new felt hat in the *mêlée*. He was conceited enough to declare that the majority of the crowd was with him, and that only the obstinate antagonism of some roughnecks had broken up the meeting. Finally, he laid the whole affair at the door of his political enemies. It was a plot. His assumption seemed almost insolent to Anne, who saw him through the eyes of the crowd. His dress, everything that he did and said, was typical of the privileged few. He had nothing in common with the masses.



Once again she sat tight and listened as the vast amphitheatre of Madison Square Garden echoed with the crashing of bands and the thunder of applause. Once more she faced the bitter truth. Lined up with the brilliant politicians of his own party, Grenville sank almost out of sight. The triumphal acclamations were for them, not for him. She felt as the multitude seemed to think, that he was tolerating them only for a cause; and by no subtle pretext could this newly-blown orator of the elect blind them to the flinty selfishness of his nature. This inherent haughtiness, the inborn pride of a Karley, would spell his defeat.

Upon their return home, the aunt said to Anne: "You've seen now for yourself what a tremendous following Grenville has among the right sort of people. The fact that the *hoi polloi* reject him will react in his favor."

This one night of political insight gave to Anne a single-thoughted sense of duty, the unswerving devotion to Grenville's cause.

She reckoned, and wisely, that if the nice people of the city supported him, they could easily swamp the opposing masses, the great unwashed, as Honoria termed them. She knew that only

one conservative newspaper, out of three, supported Grenville's candidacy. The yellow press and the labor organs opposed him, the *Evening Gazette* more bitterly than all the rest. The press was the all-powerful factor. Why not direct her activities in that direction? Resources she had none; but energy and perseverance she possessed.

She would do a little personal campaigning on the quiet, and make it a point to visit all the leading editors to ascertain if possible the cause of their opposition toward Grenville. But she must first arm herself with some campaign literature strong and original enough to command the attention of these editors. She would try her hand at writing, but it would be necessary to have something to work from, like the document she had given to Rodney, which expressed Grenville's political ideas more vividly than he seemed able to deliver verbatim from the platform.

What was to hinder her from appealing directly to Rodney? The unfortunate incident at Meadowmere was still Grenville's affair, not hers. What a feather in her cap if she could induce Rodney to come out boldly for Grenville on the very eve of election. She would make it a pas-

sionate as well as a personal appeal, relying upon him as a friend, whose weakness, perhaps, was pretty women. She would make him a pleasant means to a tremendous end. But whatever she undertook must of necessity be quick and effective in effort.

Once more she reached out, this time a little more experienced, but still childlike in her confidence; and she had a thrill of fierce delight at the thought of outstripping the aunt and Iris in their attempts to support the candidate.

. . . . .

The Rembrandt was an antiquated type of studio building. Anne found that Rodney lived on the ground floor. The entrance to his apartment was from the rear of the hall, which was rather dark, and she had to fumble about to find the bell. There was no response. Then she tried the brass door knocker, to find that the door stood partly open. She stood listening intently for a moment. Not a sound from within. As this seemed rather strange, she decided to go outside and telephone. Much better perhaps to have done that in the first place, although she had planned to surprise him.

As she stepped from the hall she met an oldish

man coming in, who seemed to recognize her. He saw his mistake on second glance, and apologized, she thought, with the servility of a servant. He looked like a valet to her; and so he was. As she passed on down the street, Wickers, who had been in Rodney's service for the last ten years, entered the studio.

Rodney was just emerging from his luxurious bath—he had a sunken bath of marble with steps leading down into it—which will account for his not hearing Anne's attempts to gain admittance.

“Did anybody ring while I was out, sir?” Wickers asked presently.

Rodney replied in the negative, adding: “Why do you ask?”

“A nice looking young lady was leaving the hall just as I returned,” was the reply. “She hadn't come from upstairs, so she must have been at your door.”

“I dare say you left the door open as usual,” snapped Rodney.

“Oh, but I'm sure she didn't belong to the light-fingered gentry,” Wickers returned indirectly.

“See here, Wickers,” Rodney said, with some warmth of temper, “I've told you for the last

time to keep that door locked. If you need the air, it's only a step to the park."

Wickers took the chiding good-naturedly. "I have to smile, sir, when I think of this young lady wanting to get in, and you in your bath. You'll pardon me, sir."

"Keep the door closed and locked," Rodney went on regardless. "Why, someone might steal in and—and murder me!"

Wickers gave a little shiver. "I hadn't thought of that, sir," he commented. "I'll never leave it open again." With a servile bow, he passed into his little two-room apartment built in at the rear. A few minutes later he heard the telephone bell ring. By the time he had opened the door, Rodney was at the telephone, and he heard him say: "Oh, Mrs. Karley! Then it was you?"

Rodney joined Anne at the corner drug-store—his greeting was most sincere and genial, and together they walked up to the park, a matter of a few minutes. They passed up and over the stone ledge to the little rustic pagoda that crowned the hill overlooking the lake. Anne had much to say in a brief space of time, and she was talking rapidly. The sun, mist obscured, was

bathing the autumnal foliage of the trees in the purplish lights of descending day.

“Then you hold nothing against Grenville?” Anne was saying with evident relief.

“I regard him simply as a big overgrown boy,” was Rodney’s response, “who’s so self-satisfied with himself that he can’t take a beating, even at cards.”

“He’s always envious of men who are gifted by nature,” Anne said.

“He’s absolutely indifferent about you, that much I know. He doesn’t care one way or the other.” Rodney broke the ice with one throw, but his insinuation came back at him with the force of a boomerang.

“But I care,” Anne declared impulsively. “I don’t want to be cast aside. I’ve suffered everything for months, years—long years, to keep my vows sacred, to keep up the pretense of a home.”

“But you are lonely, unhappy,” Rodney interposed.

She turned upon him squarely. “Don’t you see, I’m fighting for my home, for Gwennie’s future. I want to do something that will at least keep his respect for me. I was nobody when he married me, and I want to hold on to what I’ve

got. I look upon separation—divorce, as a deep disgrace. Think what it would mean to me if I could help him win the Senatorship.”

“Win or lose, your future will still be uncertain,” said Rodney. “I can see nothing but lost hopes, defeat, for your ideals. No marriage is sacred when love is dead.”

There was a short silence before Anne spoke. “But the present is mine,” she said hopefully, “and I mean to make the best of it. I mean to hold you, dear friend, to your promise given to me at Meadowmere, your promise to support Grenville’s candidacy. I want letters of introduction to other editors who are hammering him so unmercifully.”

Her plea took Rodney a little by surprise. “My promise is my oath,” he said. “Would it give you much pain if I broke it?”

“More than I can say,” came faintly from her lips.

“Would you be willing to accept a compromise?”

“I might,” she said.

The rays of the sun came aslant the ridge of rocks, and burnished the lake in the hollow.

“We’ll talk it over again to-morrow,” Rodney

suggested. "Meantime, I will draw up a little plan of my own."

That sounded more hopeful, so Anne agreed. Then she asked about the manuscript. Rodney remarked that it was quite safe with him; adding: "Am I violating any compact in keeping it?"

"But you're going to publish it," Anne urged. "Besides, I'm thinking seriously of writing something myself, and I might want to use it as a key for my inspiration."

Rodney then came out bluntly. "Oh, but I consider the manuscript worthless. In fact, I thought so little of it I stuffed it away with some other papers at the apartment, and I've even forgotten where I put it." When he saw the deep pain reflected upon her face, he added: "I was laboring under the impression that you wanted the matter dropped. Of course, I see things in a different light now, and we may be able to do something with it. I'll look it up by the time you call, shall we say, at four?"

Anne felt that she had won a point; she could not exactly count the day as lost.

At midnight there was a heavy knock at her door. It gave her a start, for she knew Grenville was speechmaking on Long Island, and had



expected to spend the night at Meadowmere. There was a moment of breathless silence after she had opened the door, a moment of trepidation, as she saw him standing there.

“Grenville! What is it?” She had read evil tidings in his face.

“I’ve come all the way from Meadowmere to ask you something,” he said in a low, excited voice.

“So important as all that? Why didn’t you telephone?” A thousand fears beset her; and yet what had she to fear?

“Much too important to ’phone about,” responded Grenville, as he stepped inside the room. He lowered his voice, looking at her searchingly. “A very important paper of mine is missing. I placed it in the secretaire with other private papers that first day of our week-end party.”

Anne experienced a heavy sinking feeling. “You mean the paper you wrote on ‘The Fight for Political Reform’? I thought you didn’t consider it so important. You remember how I insisted that you have it published——”

“Oh, I have that one all right.” As he spoke he drew it from his coat pocket. Anne recognized it by the robin’s egg blue cover. She

glanced over it hurriedly as the black shadow of fear encompassed her. What had she done? She handed it back tremblingly.

“The manuscript I speak of,” Grenville went on, “had the same sort of cover. And I was either drunk or crazy when I wrote it. If it falls into the hands of my political enemies, I’m lost—irretrievably lost!”

Anne tried hard to swallow the lump that kept rising in her throat. “You told me nothing about it,” she said, finally. “What was it about?”

“A personal account, in my own handwriting, of recent investigations into the brothels and hell-holes of New York.”

Anne gasped. “But the public would acclaim such an investigation.” She was groping for some excuse.

Grenville cut her off short. “Don’t you understand, it was my personal experiences, not an official investigation. I went there—for my own pleasure.”

Anne stood aghast. For a moment the mistake she had made in giving Rodney the wrong manuscript seemed to shrink out of sight in the presence of a deeper disturbance. “You would stoop to a thing like that,” she moaned, “and then put

it down in black and white?" The revelation stirred her as nothing had before; there was horror in her heart.

"You ought to know by this time that I never think decently of any woman," he said with a grimace. "There's no reason why I should keep up this standard of false morality any longer. I confess my duplicity freely."

Anne pierced him with her gaze. She had seen around the corner, and all was black despair. She had built up such a false faith in him, and now he had shattered it. She knew he was one of the few people in the world who have no kind feeling in their hearts, but she did not know,—she had always put such thoughts away from her,—that he was a man of prurient mind and devoted to promiscuous amours.

"Suppose I go down to Meadowmere and search again," Anne began.

"The first thing in the morning. Let nothing stop you."

"I'll do my best to find it."

"If it's not there," Grenville spoke fiercely, "then Rodney Webb has it. That dirty cheat would stoop to anything."

"Oh, but I'm sure it wasn't stolen," said Anne

in a half pleading voice; "at least, not taken intentionally to harm you. Let's hope it has only been mislaid."

"I'll trust you to find it." As Grenville spoke he seized Anne by the forearm, so savagely that it pained her. "You've got to find it!" he exclaimed.

After he had gone, Anne seemed to feel her heart suddenly drop, like some wild thing that has vainly tried to repress the pain of a death-wound. Why had she not told him the whole story of the mistake she had made—to have done with the questions that would be asked?

## CHAPTER VIII

### FIRES OF FATE

ONCE more Anne's plans had been smashed; and out of the wreckage of honest intention had risen a mocking spectre—Grenville's confessed infidelity. Why had he placed this hideous truth in her path?

She must now undo what she had done; but could she trust to Grenville's justice and generosity to believe that she had acted only where his greatest interest was concerned?

By ten o'clock she succeeded in reaching Rodney by telephone at the office of *Truth*. Having nothing but her own instinct and pluck to rely upon, she thought best to veil her purpose in asking for an interview before the hour set. "I must see you as soon as possible," she urged. Rodney, with voice undisturbed, said he would be tied up until three at the latest, as it was the day before publication. Anne persisted: "Only for a few minutes. Why not at luncheon time?"

She added that she was downtown, and gave her telephone number.

“Suppose I call you up at one?” Rodney suggested. “That’s the best I can do.” Then, casually: “What’s up?”

Anne replied: “I’ve changed my mind about something.”

Rodney gave a low laugh. “Oh, that’s your privilege. Still, I trust you mean to keep our appointment at four.”

“That depends,” returned Anne lightly, adding indifferently: “Did you find the manuscript, ‘The Fight for Political Reform?’ ”

“Sorry, but I neglected to look for it,” was the response.

“It really doesn’t matter,” Anne assured him in conclusion.

She tried to pass the time by joining the shopping throngs. Never had she felt so hopelessly alone.

When she returned to the hotel from which she had telephoned, she was disappointed to learn that Rodney had called in the meantime. It was not quite one. So she took a taxi and drove to the office of *Truth*.

No; Mr. Webb had just stepped out—a blonde

functionary at the switchboard in the outer office informed her. He had left no message; he might return within an hour; again, he might not come back at all during the afternoon. Perhaps he had gone to the Rembrandt? The blonde person thought that hardly likely at this hour of the day.

Without stopping for lunch, Anne drove immediately to the Rembrandt. Wickers answered her ring promptly, and showed some surprise at her presence. Anne recognized him from the previous day, and smiled graciously, although she noticed that he regarded her with rather sorrowful eyes. "You're Mrs. Karley, I believe?" he said offhand.

Anne winced a little under the recognition, and betrayed her nervousness when she learned that Rodney had just telephoned that he would not be home until five to dress for dinner. "But he has an appointment to see me at four," she explained.

"He never fails to keep his appointments with the ladies, ma'am," Wickers ventured. "Sorry you missed him at the office, and I'll tell him when he 'phones."

Rodney was not in when she called the second time at the Rembrandt, but he was sure to be

home by five. She wondered if the valet was lying to her, as again she passed out, this time into the autumnal dusk, with myriads of lights glimmering down the vista of streets.

To fill in the time, she drove around the park, and then left the taxi, planning to walk back, in the effort to calm her nerves. She was acting in a lie. She had decoyed herself into this false position, and was now held a prisoner. She had the indefinable sense of helplessness, not only of herself but of her son. She felt hemmed in by the fires of Fate. Somehow Gwennie seemed to share all that she was risking. In saving the father from humiliation and disgrace, which threatened him on account of her thoughtless act, would she not be protecting the name of her boy?

When again she stood outside Rodney's door, her clear eyes had lost their light; her face had a haggard, anguished expression; there were lines in it that told of a quick transition from things hopeful to the bitter despondency of calamity. This time she was promptly admitted by Wickers, who said: "Mr. Webb is dressing for dinner, ma'am. He will see you in a few minutes."

Anne sat down in the hall to wait. It was a long, narrow hallway, and rather dimly lighted



by the ruddy glow of a swinging lantern. In the excitement of the moment she felt it close and stuffy, and pressed her hand to her hot cheek. Wickers, observing her seeming discomfort, opened the door a little, although he knew it was against his master's orders.

Anne made an effort to compose herself by studying her surroundings. There were niches in the walls holding statues, panels of old Italian lace, and mirrors. She noticed a large mirror at the end of the hall that gave a feeling of space, and was so hung as to reflect the soft lights in the adjoining room, giving one the impression of looking around a corner. Under a shield and two steel spears, she observed a glass cabinet, containing a collection of curious weapons.

Feeling a little more composed, she rose and made a closer inspection of the curio cabinet. There were daggers and rapiers, some with curiously carved handles. One in particular she noticed—a dagger with a sharp-pointed blade, its handle being encrusted with rubies and emeralds. Its beauty attracted her. She ran her fingers over the jewels to see if they were real, and finding it easily removable from the panel,

she held it in her hand for a moment, where it glowed like some live thing.

Hearing footsteps, she glanced down the hall. She saw Wickers approaching. She quickly restored the dagger to its place, and then the valet appeared. What she had first seen was his reflection in the mirror, so she took it for granted that he had not noticed her handling the weapon. She explained that she was just admiring the collection.

“Quite all right, ma’am,” Wickers remarked; “they are perfectly useless and collect a lot of dust, but Mr. Webb seems to get much pleasure out of them.” Then he showed her through the living room and library into the drawing-room, remarking as they passed through the library that his master had some rare old Mennoyer drawings there. But it was too dark to observe the pictures. The three rooms could be thrown into one, and were separated only by heavy curtains. There were dim wall-lights burning in the living room, but none in the library.

From where Anne stood in the drawing-room she could look between the curtains to the far end of the living room. The drawing-room evidently fronted on the street, but the windows were con-

cealed under old rose brocade with a fleur-de-lis design done in gold. For distraction, she was eager to fasten her mind on anything. She noticed the touch of gold in the panel mirrors, the gleam of crystal in the girandoles, and the predominance of pink roses in the upholstery.

Rodney entered the room before she was aware of his presence. In the highly excited condition of her nerves she started perceptibly when she saw him standing in the curtained entrance.

For a moment he held her hand without a word, then he spoke very graciously and softly. "I'm so sorry you've been put to all this inconvenience, but it has been through no fault of mine. I tried to get you on the 'phone, and of course I took it that you had postponed our appointment at four."

"A day of errors," Anne sighed; "of stupidity on my part. But having changed my mind about something, I felt I should get in direct touch with you at once."

"About what?" asked Rodney.

"I've decided to release you from the compact," Anne replied: "our little secret understanding about publishing the manuscript and supporting Grenville. I feel that Grenville is

strong enough to go it alone, and that my amateurish efforts to assist him on the quiet might hinder his chances of election, should they become known."

"Surely nothing discreditable on your part," returned Rodney. "Still, I think you've made a wise decision. Much better to let him fight his own battle."

"It will be a clean fight now between the opposing candidates," said Anne.

"And the stakes will be—?" Rodney began.

"If Grenville wins, as I'm sure he will, it will make us all very happy," Anne concluded, hopefully.

"Meantime, you must have something refreshing," Rodney suggested. He touched a button. "You really look fagged out, like the persecuted heroine in a melodrama."

Anne smiled grimly. "I feel anything but like a heroine," she commented.

"I hate heroines," drawled Rodney, as he lit a cigarette. "They're always so pure."

Just then Wickers entered, bearing a silver tray with two glasses of red wine. "I always keep it for medicinal purposes," Rodney said as he held up his glass. Anne took only a few sips, sud-

denly remembering that she had gone without lunch.

“Here’s to the safety and happiness of wives,” said Rodney, then drained his glass.

“And here’s to the men who respect them,” Anne added swiftly.

Wickers withdrew from the room. To Rodney, his valet was only a piece of furniture, without eyes, ears or tongue.

One purpose was set and burning in Anne’s mind, to get back the manuscript. She wondered where he had stuffed it away. Perhaps the matter was already in type. How to begin? Suppose that he should refuse to return it to her? For an instant her blood ran chill. She tried to appear composed, and prattled away on various subjects. She spoke of the charm of his quarters. “Still, you seem to run to extremes, with Louis Seize things in the parlor and wicked looking spears and daggers in the hall.” She smiled.

“Oh, all those weapons are auction stuff, of no value whatsoever,” Rodney explained.

“I noticed a curiously shaped dagger, really wonderful,” Anne went on enthusiastically.

“A very good fake,” rejoined Rodney; “the original, I learned, is owned by some Oriental

potentate. It's symbolic, you know, and represents passion. The red jewels signify the glow of love, the emeralds, green-eyed jealousy." He watched her searchingly as he spoke.

"Very interesting." Anne's eyes lighted up. "Why not utilize it as a paper-knife? You might cut up manuscripts that were loaned to you."

Rodney caught on in a flash. "But you said it didn't matter now."

"It doesn't. You said yourself you considered it of no value." She was trying artful evasion. Then she became a little more serious. "It's customary to return such things, isn't it?"

"And so you really want it back?" He regarded her with a faint, amused smile.

"Well, naturally——"

"Is this the paper you refer to?" He drew the script from his inner coat pocket and held it up.

"It must be," she returned, with sudden animation. "It has the same cover, a robin's egg blue." She took a step forward.

Simultaneously, Rodney turned and walked to a small gilt table, with an inlaid top, standing in the center of the room. He must have touched a secret spring somewhere, for a drawer flew open. He placed the paper in the drawer, which

snapped shut. His manner was of polite defiance.

“If it’s of no value, why do you lock it up?” Anne inquired, artfully.

“What would you give to have it back?” Rodney asked with sudden vehemence.

Anne tried to appear unconcerned. “I’m not here to discuss terms. I’m simply appealing to you as a friend.”

“Yet you came here this evening with your mind made up to get possession of it—at any cost.”

Anne flared up a little. “Aren’t you taking a good deal for granted?”

“You know what’s in that script,” Rodney exclaimed.

“I do now, but I didn’t when I gave it to you,” said Anne, growing white. “I know it’s something that would blacken Grenville’s name.”

“He missed it, and put it up to you. That accounts for this sudden change of mind on your part, this sudden desire to release me from the compact.” Rodney’s voice was growing more excited. “And I’ll wager anything that you didn’t tell him what really had become of it.”

“No, I didn’t,” Anne returned, honestly. “It

was given to you in confidence, and you led me to believe it was worthless. Knowing its value, I still have implicit trust in you. You will let it remain where you've just placed it."

"*Truth* goes to press to-morrow," Rodney said, in a challenging voice.

"I know, it goes to press every Wednesday, but you're too much of a gentleman to publish the contents of that paper."

"Just watch me," exclaimed Rodney. "I mean to publish it a few days before election."

That was what Anne wished to know; what she had been leading up to. It was not to come out on the morrow. She breathed more freely. Then she said: "Oh, you couldn't, and be honest with yourself or with me." She turned to go. It was in her mind to leave him baffled.

"You're going?" asked Rodney anxiously.

"Yes; and I mean to tell Grenville that the missing paper has been found. That it is in your possession."

"You mean you'll tell him that I—I stole it?"

"Oh, how cruel you are!" Anne sighed heavily. Then she added: "I mean to shoulder all the blame as to how it got into your keeping. Then it will become simply a matter between Gren-



ville and yourself. You still have a grudge to settle, and this will be another. Please settle them both as amicably as you can." She advanced toward him. "And now, good-night."

Rodney laughed incredulously. "I'll call a taxi." He excused himself.

The moment he was gone, Anne gave a frightened glance around the room, then glided softly to the little gilt table. She felt nervously about it for the secret spring. Not finding it, she tore at the drawer itself, clutched frantically at it. Then she sensed that she was not alone in the room. Looking up, she faced Rodney. His going had only been a ruse.

"I thought as much," he remarked, bitterly.

"But, don't you realize that if you keep this manuscript," said Anne, once more in control of herself, "that you will be placed in a very dangerous position?"

"I'm not afraid of Grenville, damn him!" he returned sullenly.

She turned to go. Rodney's manner changed as if by magic. "My dear Mrs. Karley, why all this fuss to save a husband's reputation when he has lost every vestige of affection for you? Be honest with yourself, with your friends."

“Friends?” Anne glanced up inquiringly.

“A young woman in your position must see the fitness, the absolute necessity of having one friend at least. Why all this false morality, this cowardly regard for conventionalities? What does this millionaire’s money amount to when he doesn’t give you even the pitiful pay that he throws to a painted woman in the streets?”

Anne retreated, shivering. “Please don’t talk to me like that,” she begged.

“As for this manuscript, I hold it at a price. I’ll give it back to you, tear it into shreds, anything you say, if you will only—” he paused. He laid his hand endearingly upon her arm. “Let me prove to you my honesty, my loyalty.”

Anne drew away from him, shuddering. There was a startling change in her eyes.

“I don’t wish to be unpleasant,” Rodney went on passionately, “but you can’t say that you haven’t led me on, given me reason to hope. You’ve met me halfway in everything so far. You must realize how disagreeable it would be if your husband——”

Anne raised her hand appealingly, which had the desired effect. Rodney stopped short. She regarded him for a moment with deep pity in her

eyes. "Either you're drunk or crazy to talk to me like this."

"I'm perfectly sane, except on one subject—" he paused, then added grimly: "and that's you."

"Why—why have I been so blind?" she asked herself. She turned upon him squarely. "I realize now," she said rather sadly, "what it means to appeal to a man through his false standards as a friend. I never thought of you in any way except as a friend, and you can't frighten me by threatening to blacken my honest intentions."

He laughed lightly. Instantly a picture was recalled to her mind. They were sitting under the arbor in the garden at Meadowmere, in the black and silver of shadow and moonshine. Once again she saw him, as she had seen him in the garden that night. She retreated, shuddering.

"I want you as I have never wanted any other woman," he confessed tensely, slowly advancing.

Anne looked around helplessly. "I came to you as a friend. You have outraged my trust in you. What am I to think?"

"Call me a coward if you like," said Rodney. "I don't mind being called names by a pretty woman."

"Oh, you're contemptible!" Anne flared up.

“And I mean to hold you accountable for this insult.”

“Insult?” Rodney chuckled. “You came here of your own accord——”

“And I mean to leave of my own accord.” Anne made a move to leave the room, but Rodney cleverly blocked her way. “See here, Mrs. Karley, you can’t play with fire without getting your wings singed. You’ve been playing with me ever since the night of the motor car accident. You’ve been playing me for a good thing for the sake of that damn husband of yours, when he would give up half his fortune to find you in a compromising scene like this. So don’t go too far, or I might get nasty. You’re here now, and you might as well accept my conditions.”

“I’m not afraid of you,” said Anne; “and I have no intentions of accepting any conditions. Why should I?” She eyed him scornfully. “If you stand in my way any longer, I’ll—I’ll scream.”

“You wouldn’t be so foolish,” Rodney chided.

Anne accepted the challenge. “I’ll do anything to show you up for what you are!” she blazed. “You’re low-down, vicious——” That was as far as she got, for it took just that spark from

her own fire of repulsion and abhorrence to touch off the magazine of Rodney's pent-up passion.

Instinctively she felt that the man had lost his reason. She tried to cry out, but his hand was over her mouth, a hand that felt like claws. She struggled, and all the time she felt herself growing more helpless in the clutches of this uncontrollable insanity of unbridled passion. She wondered at this wiry strength that could crush her with terrible suffering. The shock to her mentality was even worse than the physical pain. She felt the poison of lips upon her cheeks, her hair. Her strength finally succumbed; she saw the objects in the room racing away from her, and there was a mist growing in front of her eyes.

Then something seemed to still the force that was devouring her. In chilling terror she felt his arms and body lose all their vitality. Rodney gave a broken, stifling cry; his breath was coming in gasps as the throbbing veins were tightened and throttled.

Freed from his embrace, she recoiled a moment. Horror-struck, she watched him stagger, then fall face downward upon the floor. After a violent convulsion of the body, he lay quite still. Bending over him she was vaguely conscious of

something that gleamed red and green. With a choking cry she realized what had happened. Rodney had been stabbed in the back, and the weapon was "Passion's" dagger. She recognized it from the jeweled hilt. Her first impulse was to let the dagger remain imbedded where it was, then the thought came that if it had not pierced his heart, she might still save him. Overcoming a spasm of horror, she knelt down beside him, and drew out the weapon. She dropped it shudderingly upon the floor beside the body.

The silence of death prevailed; she could hear her own labored breathing.

She approached the door in the rear of the living room which opened into the valet's quarters. She shook the door by the knob, and finding it locked, pounded upon it. Wickers appeared finally, sleepy-faced and wide-eyed, as if he had been awakened from sound slumber.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" he inquired.

"Look!" Anne cried convulsively. That was all she could say, as she kept pointing towards the drawing-room. She followed Wickers into the library, and remained there while he passed on. She saw that he was deadly white when he returned. "Why, he's dead, ma'am," he whis-

pered hoarsely. Then he asked: "Was there anyone else in the room?"

"I saw nobody," Anne moaned; "it all happened so quickly. Oh, please send for someone. Telephone for my husband, Grenville Karley, at once. His number is——"

"I'll find it, ma'am," said Wickers as he walked away. He turned just before leaving the room. "Hadn't I better notify the police?"

The effect of the word police was like a blow. She lurched a little forward, supporting herself by the back of a chair. "Yes; yes. Call the police."

The moment Wickers had disappeared into the living room, the set resolve that had influenced her actions all through the day, that had outlived the horror of the moment, came back to her more forcibly than ever. She crept stealthily into the drawing-room, keeping her head slightly turned away from the grewsome sight upon the floor. She groped as one blind until her fingers closed upon the top of the little gilt table. She found the secret spring, pressed it; the drawer flew open. She snatched up the manuscript that Rodney had placed there, concealed it on her person, and had barely time to creep back into the library,

when Wickers returned. "We'll just have to wait now, ma'am," he said in a hushed voice, "till somebody comes."

Anne sank weakly into a chair in the darkened library. Wickers walked quietly into the drawing-room, and a moment later, she heard him moaning to himself.

The doorbell rang, rousing her from the lethargy of despair. Wickers hurried by like a gray phantom. She heard voices. When she looked up, Grenville was bending over her.

"My God! This is terrible!" she heard him exclaim.

Then the police came.

Before they entered the room, Anne clutched Grenville's arm. "Listen to me," she whispered, as she pulled him closer to her. "The missing manuscript, I found it here. He tried to keep it from me——"

"Then he did steal it?"

"No; I gave it to him myself, at Meadowmere, and by mistake. He had promised me to help you win. It was a little secret between us." Her voice trailed off plaintively into nothingness as the police filed grimly through the dimly lit room.



Watching her chance, she transferred the document into her husband's keeping.

As she sank deeper into the chair, Grenville found her hand. "I want you to promise me something, Anne," he urged under his breath. He kissed her with cold lips upon the forehead. "That you will never reveal what brought you here."

"I'll promise anything," she echoed vaguely, clinging to him convulsively. "I promise," she repeated.

"There'll be an autopsy, of course," he went on. "It may turn out to be a suicide.

Anne shuddered. "It's all very strange to me. I did not see him struck down. There was no one else in the room."

"No matter what happens, I'll get you out all right," said Grenville, reassuringly.

It came upon Anne then for the first time that she might be suspected of murder. The thought had no sooner flashed through her mind than the curtains were flung back, and she was revealed, her face a dead white, in the sudden shaft of light.

"Is this the woman?" the police lieutenant asked the valet. Wickers nodded his head sor-

rowfully. "But I'm sure she had nothing to do with it," he said.

Grenville stepped forth. "I happened to be the first to arrive, officer," he said, "and I found the door into the hall wide open."

Wickers started perceptibly. "Yes; I did leave it open when Mrs. Karley arrived, and against my master's orders. I forgot to close it. I was in my quarters at the rear, sir——"

"Who's this man?" the lieutenant interposed, indicating Grenville with a jerk of his head.

Grenville made himself known. "And this is my wife," he added.

Thereupon all eyes were turned upon Anne, who sat motionless in the chair, her head inclined to one side, and breathing heavily.

"She's fainted," said the lieutenant.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FACE REAPPEARS

FOR days the front pages of the press had been emblazoned with the facts, alleged and otherwise, of the murder. Rodney Webb, famous dilettante, the brilliant and brainy editor of that caustic and snappy political weekly, *Truth*, mysteriously struck down in his apartment at the Rembrandt, during the clandestine visit of Mrs. Grenville Karley, wife of the candidate for the Senate. . . . Young wife, of humble parentage, declares her innocence. . . . Husband, a member of one of the city's wealthiest and most distinguished families, active in her defense. . . . Element of oriental mysticism colors the case, owing to curiously designed dagger, and the manner in which death was inflicted. . . . Who struck the fatal blow? And so on.

The case finally sifted down to the general

condemnation of the woman. Since God created male and female, woman has been paying dearly for her sex. "Damn the woman!" has echoed down the ages.

The public could only see Anne as the unfaithful wife. A victim of chance, she stood tragically alone. What grim circumstance had conspired to send her to prison as a murderess? Would there be no release ever from these stone walls that seemed to smother her?

A little ray of cheerful light in her darkest hours was Grenville's belief in her innocence. But one day he said to her: "When you are brought to trial, the prosecution will try to prove something else besides the actual crime."

"But you wouldn't believe that of me?" She clutched him by the arm.

"Not so long as you keep your promise to me," he rejoined lightly, "about your real motive in visiting Rodney at that hour in the evening."

"To save the honor of the house of Karley," Anne sighed.

"To save yourself, too," Grenville put in.

"Yes; I might have spared myself all this if I had told you everything that night, but I had

no excuse to offer for my apparent wrongdoing. After what you confessed to me, I stood in terror of admitting the mistake I had made. I trusted Rodney rather than you. I was blind—foolish——”

“We want to get you acquitted,” Grenville broke in; “nothing else matters now. We plan to speed the trial up as much as possible, and you will not be required to take the stand.” Anne looked at him inquiringly. “I’ll let you in on a little secret,” he added. “The moment the State rests its case, your counsel will waive its right of argument and ask immediate submission of the case to the jury.”

Anne leaned back against the wall. “I’m in your hands, and, oh, so helpless!” She paused. “Supposing things go against me?”

“Now don’t look on the dark side of everything,” he chided, a little petulantly.

“How can I help it when I’ve disgraced, ruined you all forever?” She spoke with a dry, choking sob in her voice. “I’ve spoiled all your chances for winning the Senatorship, just when I was trying to help you.”

“You may be the means of my getting in,” he returned, coolly. The condemnation of his

wife had won for him the public's sympathy. He was basking in a false light.

"Is it true," Anne went on, "that the world never forgives a woman who makes one mistake in her life—will never take her back into the fold?"

"That sounds like you've been reading the *Evening Gazette*," he remarked scathingly. "You know it's against my orders for you to read the newspapers."

"It was only a clipping," she assured him; "one of the sentenced help gave it to me."

Grenville hushed her with an impatient gesture, and rose. "If you can't see fit to do as I ask you, I despair of ever getting you out. And by no means talk to a reporter. If they quizz you, just say, 'see my lawyer.'" He glanced over the head of Anne as she sat on a bench in the matron's office, through the open door, into the courtyard. "There's Pumpelly now, waiting for me." He hurried off without another word.

Pumpelly was Honoria's choice of a lawyer rather than Grenville's. He had seen his best days, and had grown rich in selling his wits to get people out of trouble and jail; an overfed,

rotund sort of person, with a red, apoplectic face.

The day of the trial dawned darkly; a chill October day. When the great oaken doors of the trial-room were opened, men and women fairly fought their way through a cordon of police to gain access.

“The State will show that the dead man and this defendant were lovers; that there was animosity and also quarreling between them.” The voice of the accuser sounded frightfully in Anne’s ears.

“There is no mystery attached to this terrible crime that has shocked the community,” the prosecutor continued. “We shall offer evidence to prove that this woman, blinded by guilty love and rage, delivered the death-blow that sent one of the most brilliant-minded men of New York into eternity.”

Anne gazed about the courtroom helplessly, with eyes filled with terror, seeking in vain for some gleam of trust, of sympathy.

“The State will further show that the defendant, before the killing of Rodney Webb, had shamelessly carried on an illicit intrigue with him under the very roof of her home—the roof

that sheltered her only child, and this while under the loving protection of her husband."

Anne's hands clenched, and her lips moved in grim defiance. "Lies, all lies!" she whispered to her counsel, who, by a glance, gave her to understand that she must take her medicine courageously.

"We shall show this young wife's restlessness," the accuser continued; "and how she kicked against the traces, like so many wives of to-day, refusing to share the joy and responsibility of a real home. She wanted adventure. Born to lowly estate, she became madly extravagant. She longed for greater freedom."

Lady Dawkins was the first witness called, and it hurt Anne like a sword-thrust to learn for the first time that her little intrigue with Rodney had been misinterpreted so cruelly. But the dowager lady proved to be a refractory witness.

She told ramblingly of what she had seen the night Anne and Rodney had met upon the terrace. "I saw their shadows on the white window blind, but I couldn't for the life of me make out what they were talking about outside of politics. Then I saw their shadows merge into one. This might have meant a kiss or a



caress, and, again, it might not. At any rate, it occurred after the goose appeared.”

“The goose?” asked the prosecuting attorney.

“Yes; shadow pictures like your mother used to make on the nursery wall when you were in knee panties,” responded the dowager lady.

The defense gained nothing under cross-examination; and just before Lady Dawkins stepped down from the stand, she leaned over and whispered to the Judge: “I knew your father very well. Do come up and have a cup of tea with me.” But all she got was a stern reprimand; and she gave way frigidly to Iris, who corroborated that part of the dowager’s testimony relating to the finding of Anne’s scarf and Rodney’s hat upon a bench on the terrace.

Then Honoria was called; and the effect of her testimony was like the bursting of a bomb. It seems the aunt had never told Grenville about the motor accident and Rodney’s after-midnight visit at Meadowmere, as she had vaguely implied to Anne that night that she would do.

Puggins was called as the last connecting thread with Meadowmere. He stoutly denied that he had noticed anything suspicious in the conduct of the defendant with the deceased, or

vice versa. "Still, Lady Dawkins did say to me that she suspected everything, but knew nothing. She said——"

"Well," urged the prosecution.

"Well, that everything at Meadowmere was crinkum-crankum!"

The general titter that followed this bit of testimony was silenced by the gavel.

Puggins seemed to know more about what had happened between Rodney and Grenville, and spoke spicily of the little flare-up between them over the caustic paragraph in *Truth*, and later, at cards, whereupon Pumpelly took objection to the matter as wholly irrelevant. It looked for a moment as if Pumpelly was there to shield Grenville and not his wife; but the inference among the few was lost at the uproar caused when Puggins started to revile the dead man, ending up with: "Rodney Webb was a cur, and got what he deserved." As a result of his tirade, he was fined twenty-five dollars for contempt of court, which he cheerfully paid.

Election day brought things to a standstill. Before the great steel bolts were shot for the night, Anne was informed of Grenville's sweeping victory at the polls. She did not seem to

mind. She was tired out. During the afternoon she had begged for something to do, and the matron had given her a pail of water and a brush, so she had scrubbed the floor of her cell.

At the resumption of the trial, the telephone girl at the office of *Truth* was the first witness called.

“Did you overhear any of the conversation that passed between the defendant and the deceased over the telephone?” queried the prosecutor.

“I did not,” the girl flashed back. “I never listen in, and I just happened to be conversing with a friend of mine in Greenpoint.”

“Talk a little louder!” snapped the attorney, who was disappointed over her testimony. He watched her shift her chewing gum from one side of the mouth to the other with evident disgust. “Leave it at home next time,” he admonished in an undertone.

The girl stared at him. “My Gawd, is it against the law to chew gum?” she asked.

“That’s all!” roared the attorney.

Thereupon the blonde person stepped down from the stand with a display of filmy lace and trim ankles.

Wickers, during the first part of his testimony, kept his eyes upon the prisoner, and they were eyes of deep compassion. He was finally ordered by the prosecution to direct his remarks to the jury.

“ . . . Well, when I returned to the hall——”

“What did you see?”

“First, I saw the defendant in the reflection of a mirror at the end of the hall. That was before she saw me. I noticed that she was standing before an open cabinet upon the wall, in which Mr. Webb kept a collection of weapons. She had actually removed one of the weapons, a dagger, from its place, and was evidently admiring it.”

“Did she put it back?”

“Yes; when she heard me coming. She seemed confused when I stepped into the hall, and I spoke of the collection of weapons more to relieve her embarrassment than anything else, sir.”

The State then offered in evidence the blood-stained dagger. As the prosecuting attorney held it up for identification, the jeweled hilt caught the rays of artificial light and gave out sparks of

red and green. Anne, at the sight of it, gave a smothered cry.

“Can you identify this?”

Wickers swore that it was the same dagger he had seen the defendant handling just before the tragedy, but was positive she had put it back in place.

“But what you really saw was in the reflection of the mirror?”

“Yes, sir.”

“After you entered the hall, did you try to establish more firmly in your mind that the dagger had been restored to its place?”

“I did not take the trouble to look, sir. I assumed it was there.”

“Could not your eyes have been deceived by the mirror?”

“She made the motion of putting it back, sir.”

“Then you’re not positive one way or the other?”

Wickers hesitated a moment before replying. “I’m—I’m not positive, sir,” he said.

A medical examiner followed the valet on the stand. He described the autopsy on the victim’s body, and declared that in his opinion any frail woman could have delivered the fatal blow. It

was also shown that there had been a struggle between the defendant and the deceased, indicated by scratches found on the face and hands of Rodney, and a slight abrasion on the cheek of the accused. In the examination of fingerprints, those identical with the prisoner's had been found both upon the blade and the hilt, and in two places her fingerprints were doubled, proving that the weapon had been handled twice by the defendant.

Finally the State rested, and then came Pummelly's sensational move in declaring that the defense would offer no testimony.

Anne lived through the next hour in a daze.

She swayed a little as she watched the bailiff handing the jury's verdict to the clerk to read.

"Murder in the second degree."

Crushed by the verdict, she was led, trembling and white-faced, from the courtroom. The one thought in her mind was that the whole world was arrayed against her.

The autumnal sun, burnishing the city in rose madder and copper, sent its slanting rays through the courtroom windows. She felt a thousand eyes upon her, so she kept her own cast upon the floor.

Suddenly she gave a perceptible start. There, across her path, lay the shadow of a woman. Glancing to the side, she saw a youngish woman, heavily veiled, standing a little apart from the crowd in the rear of the courtroom. As she looked, the veil was raised for an instant, and in that glance she recognized the strange young woman who had made such an impression upon her at St. Jude's on her wedding day.

Once again she caught the flash from those burning eyes, and then the massive doors of the prison closed upon her.

## CHAPTER X

### BURNING EYES

**M**UCH was said and written on the newly elected Senator's attempts to have the verdict set aside; his efforts to get his wife out on bail, pending an appeal. After the various motions and appeals had been denied, preparations were made to take Anne to the State Prison at Woburn, there to serve out the grim sentence that had been passed upon her—from twenty years to life. Public interest in the case was waning.

There was no outcry from Anne. She seemed to be in a daze; all her actions were mechanical. There was nothing to live for now. She had given up all claim on Gwennie. Her son was to grow up in ignorance of the mother's dishonor. Even if she were released in twenty years, he would be just upon the threshold of life.

She remembered dimly what the aunt had said: "To make it legal, we must have your



signature. It will give us a freer hand in Gwenie's bringing up, his education, his selection of friends."

Ashen shadows had gathered around Anne's mouth as she went through this ordeal. She read where she was asked to read, and signed her name, with a nervous scrawl, where she was directed to sign. As she had proved herself to her husband, she would now prove herself to her son.

Quick oblivion to all her hopes and fears was all she asked; she bowed her neck humbly to the yoke of tragic destiny. She yielded to what appeared to be a very affectionate farewell on the part of Grenville and his aunt. "I want to be forgotten," were her last words to them.

The afternoon was far spent. Only half an hour remained and she would be transferred to another prison. She sat in a dark corner of her cell, agonizingly alone, and forsaken by all.

She looked up. The matron stood at the door. "A lady to see you," said the matron, who had shown her many kindnesses. "She comes from your lawyer. 'Something very important,' she says."

The interview took place in the matron's little

office, and it was not to last more than fifteen minutes. The visitor wore a dark, waterproof cloak that reached to her ankles, and a long veil of gray chiffon that concealed her face. Anne felt the peculiar burning of the eyes behind the veil; she sensed the identity of the stranger at once. She noticed that the cloak was moist. It gave her an opportunity to break the tense silence. "I didn't know it was raining," she said. "We know so little in here of what is going on outside." As she spoke, she glanced around the bare room, with its whitewashed walls and barred windows.

"But you must know by this time that you have a friend." The visitor's voice was soft and gentle. She raised her veil.

"Who are you?" gasped Anne. "Why do you come here?"

"To right a wrong," the visitor replied sagely.

"I saw you at the church, in the crowd, on my wedding day," Anne went on excitedly; "and the other day, in the courtroom; and now here. What does it mean?"

The young woman held out her hand. "Please don't ask any questions," she begged.

She had the poise, the voice, of a woman of

culture. In gazing at her, Anne had the uncanny impression of looking at herself in a mirror, so greatly did they resemble each other. Yet she could not account for the dusky skin, the slightly aquiline nose, the high cheek bone, unless——

“Yes; I’ve Indian blood in me,” the visitor spoke intuitively. “My father was white, and my mother a full-blooded Iroquois. But I’ve lived among the whites all my life.”

“I’ve always been told that I look like an Indian,” said Anne. “And sometimes I feel as an Indian would feel who has been wronged. Of course you know that I am innocent of this terrible crime,” she went on. She stopped short. “Why should you know?” She gave a little hysterical laugh.

The visitor came forward and laid her hand appealingly upon her arm. Anne continued, wildly: “What have I done to be punished like this? I’m alone—God knows how utterly alone. Everything has been taken from me.” She looked about frightened. “Sometimes I’m afraid my mind will go, too. I’ll go mad up there in prison. . . .”

She clutched at her throat, and sank back weakly into a chair. As she sat there, a sort of

weird fascination in the eyes that looked down upon her in compassion kept her gaze from wandering. Her stretched nerves seemed to relax.

“Who are you?” she reiterated; and then she said: “I know. You’re an angel of mercy. No one ever falls by the roadside but that someone does not step out from the crowd to comfort, to help them——”

The stranger stood directly under the brightness of the electric lamp, and her face seemed to be illumined. As Anne gazed into her eyes she seemed to undergo a change. The intense emotionalism she had experienced had opened the door to her subjective mind for hypnotic control. As Dr. Jex had often told her, hers was a psychic nature, and her mind was now being slowly placed under the power of another’s suggestion. She had a feeling of deep composure, like that which precedes sleep after fatigue of mind or body.

“Think your thoughts as well as speak them, my dear,” she heard as if from afar.

“I feel much better now,” Anne murmured under the influence of this strange, subtle fluid that was pouring out of the stranger’s eyes.

The visitor smiled. “Now, you are going to

enter into a state of quietness," she went on, while Anne showed every sign of becoming obedient to her will. "Relax every muscle, and look steadily at me," the voice continued. "A drowsy, sleepy feeling is all over your body. Your eyes want to close."

Anne's body trembled—the natural protest of individual intelligence against the surrender of its rights and power of self-control. Her eyes closed.

The visitor stepped aside, and sighed in relief. She knew that she now possessed autocratic control over the prisoner's will; that she would ever be in direct connection or touch with this subjective mind. Distance could offer no resistance to its successful mission, such was her wonderful hypnotic power.

She leaned over the silent figure in the chair to give the post-hypnotic suggestions.

"Listen, my dear," the visitor said. "You must forget everything and everybody, even your husband and your child, that have influenced your life up to this moment."

Anne nodded assent.

"When anybody asks who you are, simply say: 'I'm called Daughter of the Moon.' You are an

Indian—a half-breed. Do you understand? Now, you must obey me, and do everything I suggest. Remember, you are a bead worker. You've made your living that way ever since you were a little girl. And you've always been good—haven't you?"

As she spoke, the stranger swept her hand lightly across Anne's forehead. Anne opened her eyes.

"You've always been a good woman?" the stranger repeated.

Anne smiled rather feebly. She started to smooth down her hair, and seemed very pleased when the visitor gave her a small handbag. As she inspected its contents—a sewing and bead embroidery outfit—the voice that held her continued: "And always remember this—you can never be any man's wife. You are not in a condition mentally to marry, and there are other circumstances that would prevent you. Is that quite clear to you?"

Anne signified that she understood. The stranger went on:

"Once you give yourself, your body, to a man, and all that you have suffered—all this punishment—will come back to you."

Anne shrank under the threat, but quickly rallied.

“This little bag will come in handy, for you are about to start upon a long journey.” The commanding voice was lighter in tone. “Your railroad ticket is in there, and money for expenses.” The visitor glanced up at the clock. “We must hurry now, or you’ll miss your train,” she concluded.

At this juncture, the visitor quickly removed her cloak, hat and veil, and put them on Anne, who offered no resistance, so completely was she under hypnotic control.

The subconscious self in her had accepted every suggestion made by the strange woman. The subconscious, or what was really her imagination, was presiding now over every function of her organism. Nervously deranged from mental suffering, she was ignorant of the fact that she was being directed by another’s suggestions; she was just a poor puppet, without any power of resistance.

“You’re going up north now for a much needed rest,” the voice continued. “You’ve nothing to fear.”

Anne looked at her inquiringly.

“A friend of mine, a Mrs. Jimerson,” was the ready reply, “is waiting for you outside in a taxi—a red and white one; remember that. She’s an Indian woman, a bead worker like yourself, and she’ll look after you and give you plenty to do. Just try and get back your health.”

“Shall I ever hear from you?” asked Anne blandly.

“Oh, I shall be in your thoughts constantly,” replied the stranger; “and in your dreams.” She gave Anne a small silver cross attached to a mere thread of a chain. “Here’s a little remembrance. Wear it constantly, and kiss it every night before you go to bed. It’s all I ask of you—just to remember me as a friend.” At this she kissed Anne lightly upon the cheek, and then repeated softly, almost to herself: “‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’”

Anne smiled, and took the young woman’s hand. It was like bidding herself good-bye, for the stranger was dressed similarly to herself, even to the arrangement of her hair. This fact, however, made no impression upon her mind.

“I’ll do everything you say,” she declared fervently, “and I’ll go where you wish me to go.”



Their time was up. The stranger showed the tensivity of her face when she raised it to glance at the clock. She gave the final instructions to Anne in a low, hurried voice. "When the matron comes in, just make a polite bow and walk out this door," indicating the entrance to the courtyard; "don't raise your veil. Then walk across the yard to the main prison, where a man will conduct you to the street. Nod and smile at the gray-haired keeper at the gate as you pass out. Be very polite, but do not speak."

Then came the great test.

But there was no questioning in the matron's mind as the visitor bowed herself out of the room, and Anne's counterpart in the chair rose, weeping, and returned to her cell, maintaining a stolid silence until the great steel doors at Woburn had closed upon her for from twenty years to life. She had successfully carried out the great hoax; had assumed Anne's name and taken her place. Why?

Anne did not know. Her past had been blotted out. She had a new sense of existence under hypnotic influence. The past had become a Sphinx, looking out over an unyielding waste

of secret sands; the future, shadowy with dim possibilities.

A new life awaited her in the north, where nature would reclaim her. And as the train sped northward, she slept the unbroken sleep of a tired child, snuggled up close to the Indian woman who was to shelter and protect her.

## CHAPTER XI

### A NEW LIFE

**C**IRCLED to the west and north by a mountainous ridge, the little mushroom camp of woodsmen, known as Tom's, lay secure from the fierce and tempestuous winds that began to sweep down the valley at the first fall of snow. Long after autumn had painted the white ash, rock maple, beech and elm a flaming scarlet, and bronzed the tall grasses at the edge of Cedar Lake, the heart of this protected valley gleamed like an emerald.

Hemlock Rapids were navigable upstream to a point one mile below Tom's Camp. Once a month, during the open season, a small steamer panted her aged way to the headwaters of the rapids, bringing provisions and woodsmen's tools from Maryville, where the sawmills were located.

During the last year, however, the steamer had only made three trips, for all the camps, save Tom's, had been abandoned. The miles of thick

woodland had been sacked as mediæval towns were sacked by Vandal methods. This had left the camp peculiarly isolated, except for the small settlement of derelict Indians, who dwelt in lodges of logs north of the lake, the left-overs of a one-time busy spot. Orlando Mohawk acted as their chief.

They still held on through the indulgence of a white man; a man who had battled with work, with nature, who never forgot or never forgave; who took fiendish delight in making men feel that they were just so much riff-raff. Such a man was Tom Goodheart, known more familiarly in the timberland as the Wolf Killer.

He was barely thirty-five, but long exposure to the elements and grinding toil had seemed to harden and age him prematurely. For some years he had been the pride of the timber speculator and the pulp concession man, but they had tricked him, and now he was burning to revenge himself upon his fellow men. Those who rebelled against his cruelties, he kicked out of camp as "not worth a damn."

And it was to Tom's camp that Mrs. Jimer-son, a member of the Indian settlement, brought Daughter of the Moon.

Daughter of the Moon was Anne Hambleton's other self. Under the strange hypnotic phenomena, one personality had been changed into another.

There was no change of character; under the control of the mysterious woman now serving out her sentence in prison, Anne had simply developed a hypnotic personality. She had no memory of her former state except vague flashes, and she was being called by a name that was strange to her. In all her actions, outside of her natural instincts, this discarnate intelligence, far removed, impelled her, as radio guides a ship in the fog. The amazing part of this unusual condition in which she had been placed was that the submerged consciousness, about which Dr. Jex and her friends had often spoken—this inherent strain of an Indian, the heritage from her father's first love, influenced her ideas and feelings. She felt perfectly at home with Mrs. Jimerson, in an environment that was abject and crude.

Her subconscious self had absorbed the suggestion that she was a kinswoman of the Indians, and that her past was a sealed book. Auto-suggestion had become a driving power; im-

planted ideas were driving her imagination like a wild horse without reins. Her case was similar to that of a victim of hysteria and amnesia, her mind a perfect blank about herself, but otherwise normal.

She felt a little easier after breakfast, the morning after her arrival, although strange thoughts, like frightened birds, flew in and out of the window of her brain. She began to study more closely her surroundings. She noted Mrs. Jimerson's weakness for bright colors. The log cabin was a cross between a wigwam and a house. There were no bolts or bars on the doors. Upon the stone hearth sat a huge iron kettle, filled with hulled corn. There was an attic, with a flooring of loose boards, stored with unhusked corn and stalks of sugar cane, and a crudely made ladder in place of stairs. An alcove, curtained with calico, contained a bunk, and this Anne used as her bedroom.

Mrs. Jimerson had shed her "store" clothes, and appeared in an overdress of gayly figured calico, with leggings of heavy blue broadcloth, richly embroidered with beads; her coal-black hair, parted in the middle, fell in two long plaits over her shoulders.

Anne felt strong enough, after the stimulation of black coffee, to clean up the big room, while her companion squatted serenely by the fireplace, smoking an old clay pipe. Then she rested in a deep rustic chair covered with a black bear skin, while Mrs. Jimerson busied herself reducing red and white corn to meal in a mortar, using a long pounder.

When Anne sighed wearily, Mrs. Jimerson looked up. "By and by, you get well and strong."

"Who was the Indian that called yesterday?" Anne asked presently.

"Chief Orlando. He come to give protection to half-breed lady. Chief is very good Indian. He say great sin for Indian to marry white woman."

"But I can never be any man's wife." Anne spoke the words mechanically, as if impelled to speak them. Then she lapsed into a wearied silence, and finally slept a little. When she awoke she spoke of a dream—a dream that winter had gone, and spring had come, with purling brooks and singing birds.

Mrs. Jimerson had just taken down the discarded gray dress from a peg in the wall, and

was curious to know what she should do with it. The sight of it seemed to bring a feeling of terror to Anne. "Put it away," she cried; "I never want to see it again. It seems to remind me of—what?" She turned upon Mrs. Jimerson. "Tell me, where did I come from? What am I doing here? Who am I?" She half rose in her chair, then sank back wearily.

Mrs. Jimerson came to her side. "Indian woman never asks questions, and all she know and say is, half-breed lady pay to stay here long as she pleases, to make pretty things, to get back strength." She smoothed back Anne's hair tenderly.

"There's so much I can't seem to understand," said Anne. "There seems to be a high blank wall back of me, hiding everything that happened before I came here with you."

"Much better to look straight ahead," consoled the Indian woman.

"Oh, there must be something to look forward to," sighed Anne: "just the joy of living, of freedom."

"White-face mission man say plenty good times in sweet by-and-by," crooned Mrs. Jimerson.



From that moment there was a deeper understanding between the two women, so strangely unlike; and a change seemed to come over Anne, as if the past with its vague but menacing memories had been swept away. That evening she watched the sun go down, a big red ball that transformed the sky into colored glass, and silhouetted a solitary pine tree on the crest of the hill in deep, almost lacquered blackness, against the kaleidoscopic hues. Instinctively, she took the little silver cross suspended round her neck, and kissed it, softly repeating: "In remembrance." While a sweet memory passed before her like the flitting of a cloud, of a friend who had made some great sacrifice for her; whom she tried hard to remember but could not.

So her life began to adapt itself to the newness and strangeness of things about her, as if she had been born again. While she had been reduced to a mere automatic machine, controlled by the hypnotic power of the woman who had given her life as a ransom, now two hundred miles distant, she had not lost her valuation of life. Her bodily nerves were independent of the mind, and were strong enough to influence her actions, to give her the intuitive impulse to escape danger,

and to know hate and love. Carnally, she was free. And it was while experiencing this first display of the passionate senses, independent of the mind, that she first looked upon Tom Goodheart.

She had wandered from the lodge just before sunset, impelled by natural curiosity to learn more about her immediate surroundings, to get the lay of the land; and, most of all, to see what a logging camp looked like. Mrs. Jimerson, slapping up some cornmeal batter for the evening meal, did not miss her; and she had gone out wearing a long blanket, drawn tightly about her head, Indian fashion.

The air, clear as crystal, seemed to buoy her up as she walked toward the edge of the clearing. The stillness of eventide was broken by the sound of wood-chopping, and it was very near. A little further on she saw a man at work, and she sat down upon a log to watch him as he whipped his axe through the air in felling a white birch strippling. The sight thrilled her, so she rose and drew a little closer to him.

She noticed that he was young and very strong; that he had black hair, and wore a torn flannel shirt, and that his trousers had lost one

leg below the knee. She gazed at the chopper now rather than at the axe or at the tree. In moving about a dry twig snapped under her foot. Instantly the chopping ceased.

Tom, with a woodsman's trained ear, turned around, resting his axe against his bootleg. He showed no concern at the discovery of the watcher, who stood motionless as a statue. There was a swift exchange of glances, glances that reflected themselves as in the shadowy, changeful depths of silent pools.

Anne wondered who the young man was, and what he might say; she had no feeling of fear. She had been admiring his physical prowess as she did that of a wildcat that had strayed earlier in the day into Mrs. Jimerson's acreage, and had made a futile attack upon the chicken-coop.

Then she suddenly became aware of a look of ill-concealed disgust upon the man's face, while a contemptuous smile curled his lips. They were so forceful that she had the sensation of being struck in the face. She shrank back shuddering as Tom shouldered his axe and walked away, leaving the tree unfelled. She watched him until he disappeared among the tall birch trees, whose branches had taken on the warm, rich color of

the sunset clouds, piled above the western horizon in purple and flame-lit rifts. She felt disappointed that he never looked back.

Later, she related her experience to Mrs. Jimerson, who immediately guessed the identity of the woodchopper.

“Beware of the Wolf Killer,” said the Indian woman.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HOUSE OF THE WOLF KILLER

**N**OVEMBER had started with rain, and an open winter had been predicted by the old men of the Indian tribe, who still clung to their blankets, and whose weather prophecies were unfailing.

The old tub from Maryville had made its last trip, bringing back the woodsmen who had been playing the fool and blowing in their last stake. The rain had been falling all day in a gentle pitter-patter, while a wind, that chilled to the marrow, kept up a dismal soughing among the straggling pines. In the bunkhouse, a stove radiated the only cheerfulness; and a kerosene lamp, that swung from the log ceiling, afforded a certain light for a card game that was in progress. The men stood two deep around the table, expecting something to happen every moment. Things often happened at Tom's. Far removed from the ordinary haunts of men, a certain lawlessness prevailed.

The bunkhouse was commodious, with bunks built three tiers high, each one fitted with balsam boughs and coarse blankets. In one corner of the great room was a rough wooden sink, an odd collection of tin basins, flanked by roller towels, and a barrel of rain water. Through the window on this side a glimpse could be had of the cook camp, with its rusty range, long board table and array of tin dishes. Lying promiscuously about the bunkhouse were Mackinaw jackets, herrons, snow-pacs, woolen caps and mittens. And over everything hung a pall of steam, rising from the wet clothes that had been hung up to dry.

The long settled rain, enforced idleness, and the after-effects of bootleg whiskey, had put most of the men in an ugly mood. Those who were not playing black-jack, or amusing themselves by looking on, were stretched out in their bunks. The close of a desolate day, and the damp, foul air seemed conducive mostly to groans and cursing. Intermittently a man, slouching on a stool in a dark corner, coughed up his toe-nails in the pangs of whiskey sickness.

Presently there came a heavy knocking at the door, and Andre Lenoir, the camp cook and

fiddler, admitted the caller, an oldish Indian, in faded blue overalls, with a blanket thrown over his head and shoulders.

All the men turned and faced the Indian as he stood hesitatingly at the door. "Had bad luck with my squaw," he said finally; "too much squaw! Ugh!"

His remarks were greeted by a loud explosion of laughter.

"Ess it not sad, gentlemin?" Lenoir interceded. "Ze poor Indian got bad squaw. Now, he come to try and trade his wife for ze whiskey."

"Come on in, partner," spoke up Paltz, the blacksmith, from the card table; adding, as the Indian advanced into the room: "We'll fix you up, old scout. But it's no trade. We got no use fer squaws. I've knowed a heap of Injins, but I never knowed any but the meanest that'd turn tail, an' go back on their own color."

While he was speaking, a side door opened quietly, and Tom entered, so unobtrusively that no one seemed to notice him, all eyes being centered upon the old Indian.

Paltz had to walk around the card table to reach the center of the room. As he passed the

stove, a lean, bedraggled dog, a pointer that had wandered into camp that morning and had found refuge in the bunkhouse, crawled from behind a wood bin. Paltz kicked at him savagely, and the dog snarled and snapped.

“You’ve come to the right place,” he said to the Indian, “fur there’s nobody here that thinks hisself above sellin’ bootleg whiskey to a half-breed. If anybody tells you differint you tell ’em they’re spoutin’ hot air. We all know the boss logger is gittin’ squeamish over the men sellin’ it in your camp, but all you gotta do is call on me.”

So saying, he produced a bottle of gin from his hip pocket and handed it to the Indian. “Here’s the stuff, an’ believe me, it’s the goods. Pass it round among your friends. It’s a gift, ’cause I want to stand in square with you Injins——”

“Put it back,” came another voice—a voice that vibrated with rage. The men turned in surprise upon Tom.

Paltz paid no attention to it. “What’ye ’fraid of, Injin?” he pressed doggedly. “There ain’t no p’licemen, or jails, up in these parts, an’ you got rights same as us. Go on, take it!”



“Don’t you dare give it to ’im,” roared Tom, with anger that brought to sight the power of every swelling muscle.

Paltz still held out the bottle at arm’s length. “’Avadrink, anyhow,” he urged the Indian.

At that instant, Tom, deft of finger and quick on the draw, whipped out a gun. It barked once, and the bottle and its contents were shattered and scattered in the blacksmith’s hand. The Indian turned tail and bolted for the door. The slinking cur followed at his heels. The men took to cover, the table being overturned in the rush. Paltz alone stood unmoved; and with a sneering smile upon his thick lips.

“Damn good shot, that,” he commented calmly, licking his fingers. Then he wheeled squarely upon Tom. “Say, ain’t we got any say-so in this camp?” he bawled.

“You know my word is law here,” replied Tom, his lips white with rage. “If you don’t like it, get out!”

Paltz then tried to pass the situation over lightly. “Ain’t it better to keep on the good side of them Injins?”

“No more whiskey for the Indians,” said Tom, scowling, and speaking generally, for the men

had emerged from cover. "You all got to cut it out. Understand?" And with his characteristic distaste for lingering over trouble when he had got the best of it, he walked over to where Lenoir was sitting and slapped him good-naturedly upon the shoulder. "Give us a tune, sweetheart," he commanded.

As Lenoir picked up his fiddle and began to saw away, Paltz bit off a fresh quid of tobacco fiercely and, with a half-smothered oath, made his departure. Some of the men returned to their cards, while others took to the floor.

Tom was in high spirits. Having won where he often anticipated repulse, he entered into the boyish romps of the men. And he knew by experience that there was nothing more hazardous to the logging game than to have men, who were making no money, lying around idle for weeks in their bunks.

He danced just as he swung the double-bitted axe, until the sweat dripped and glistened upon his cheeks, his active body, lean and lithe, showing fine balance. His coal-black hair stuck through the crown of an old felt hat; his eyes and a two days' growth of beard were black; and in his eyes shone that primeval instinct, the sense

of watchfulness that seems to lie asleep in civilized life.

Luck of chance seemed to favor this strong man of the forest. Left without resource by the timber speculators, he had taken another year's lease on the naked land. By trick of fate, he had discovered a regular gold mine of timber located several miles east of the camp, in a narrow ravine that had been staked but not stripped. Tapping this treasure trove early in the summer, by autumn he had sent half a million feet of logs downstream to the sawmills. When the spring freshets came, he hoped to have another half a million feet to put in the boom.

Nobody knew why he hated women. The Indian women in camp said that he had ice water in his veins. He had incurred Mrs. Jimerson's hostility by trying to drive her from one of the camp's outlying shanties to the Indian settlement. He said she knew too much for an Indian woman, and he was envious of the business she did in beadwork and baskets with the agents at Maryville, who supplied the general trade with Indian hand-made novelties.

. . . Suddenly, in the midst of the merriment, a youth, pale, slender, with a mop of flaxen hair that needed the shears, burst into the room. It

was the kitchen boy, known in the camp as the Crazy Kid. He had drifted into the camp some two years previous, after escaping from a government hospital, where he had been kept since the close of the war, a victim of shell-shock, having long periods of silence, broken at times by the most fearful recollections of grim conflict. The sight of blood, or any form of cruelty, seemed to drive him frantic.

Tom, by giving him shelter, had won a firm place in the lad's affections, although he was as a rule indolent, and, like the Indian, had an aversion to work. When asked to tell his name, he would invariably reply: "Ask the moon." He always referred to his parents as a "couple of stars."

"'Ere's that dippy dipper agin," a lumberman remarked as the boy hurried to where Tom stood, clapping his hands in musical rhythm, while a lumberjack did a clog dance, shouting as he danced: "I'm a bob-cat! I'm a bob-cat!"

"Well?" interrogated Tom. And the moment he spoke he sensed that something has gone wrong, for the lad's eyes were set and staring, and his fingers were twitching.

"Paltz kill my dog," the boy cried. "My poor dog—my good friend!"

As Tom spoke the men crowded round them. "Now, don't get excited, kid," he said in a voice that was both gruff and gentle; "keep your shirt on, and tell us just what happened."

The Crazy Kid related in broken sentences how he had been feeding the dog, which led a frightened life on the outskirts of the camp; how he had finally coaxed him to the cook-house, when Paltz came and drove him into the blacksmith shop. "I look in window. I see Paltz tie my dog to anvil. Then he picked up long piece of iron, and he beat my dog. My poor friend!" He burst into a paroxysm of tears.

Tom did not wait to hear another word. He stalked out of the bunkhouse, while the men crowded at the window.

Paltz had just raised a long rod of iron, and with face contorted and eyes bloodshot, was about to deliver the death blow upon the helpless cur at his feet, the dog that had snarled and snapped at him in the bunkhouse, when Tom, with a pantherlike spring, rushed upon him, snatched the rod from his grasp, and with one blow of the fist sent the blacksmith sprawling upon the cinders.

As Paltz struggled to his feet, Tom seized the

rod. Every muscle was trembling, and there was a fierce light in his eyes.

“I ain’t done no hurt to you,” bawled Paltz, for he was a coward at heart. “That dirty cur bit at me, an’ I gotta right to protect myself.” He glanced down at the limp form of the dog. “He got what was comin’ to ’im.”

“And you’re going to get what’s coming to you,” roared Tom.

Paltz retreated a few steps. “You ain’t goin’ to kill me, boss?” he mumbled hoarsely. “Why, I only struck ’im a couple o’ times.”

“Hold out your arm,” commanded Tom.

“You dare strike me, an’ my friends in camp will stick you up,” cried Paltz in heat. “There ain’t a man in camp but’ll stand up fer me agin’ you.”

“Hold out your arm!” Tom repeated, with blazing eyes.

Paltz extended his arm, and quick as a flash, Tom brought down the iron rod with full force upon it. Paltz groaned in pain; but he had to take his medicine. The second blow cut a deep welt, but the blacksmith’s muscles were so strong that the rod was bent in two. He sank down upon his knees and plunged his bleeding arm into

a tub of water. "Who keers a damn?" he drawled.

Tom glanced down at him reproachfully, for he knew that the meaner a man is, the more revengeful. "You red-faced son of Judas 'Scariat," he exclaimed. "If you start stirring up trouble among the men, or if ever I catch you beating this dog again, I'll kick you out of camp."

At this juncture Chief Orlando strolled up. Paltz saw him, and said under his breath: "I could hit a man when he's down, too, if I had the Injins back of me." Rising, he continued defiantly, "Some day you're goin' to git your neck stuck in a noose. You ain't the law, not by a damn sight!"

Tom gulped down his resentment, tossed the iron rod aside, then picked up the dog and carried it to the cook-house, where it was left in the care of the Crazy Kid. When he returned to the bunkhouse the men were in the midst of their hilarity as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened, but Tom was not blind to the malicious glances cast at him. The majority of the men took sides with the blacksmith. Although this hostility towards the boss logger slumbered, it was like a wood ember, which a sudden blast of wind can turn into a red-hot coal.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CONFLICT

**T**HE report that a strange woman had suddenly dropped into camp unheralded, as from the skies, spread quickly, and the effect upon these uncouth denizens of the forest, all women hungry, was most exciting. Lenoir took the initiative in sprucing up, and sallied forth, the day following her advent, to see what he could see. But all he saw was Mrs. Jimerson, sitting stolidly at her window, apparently unconcerned, and intent upon her beadwork. Then all the younger lumberjacks, washing up and primping, unobserved, as they thought, crept out, one by one, and took a walk past the lodge, while the older and more experienced men hid behind trees and geyed them.

Tom resented their behavior, and that night he spoke his mind.

“Now, see here, men,” he said, “I won’t stand for any monkey-shine business regarding this



woman, whoever she is, that's come to hang out with Mrs. Jimerson. Nobody asked my permission for her to come here, and I don't want her in camp; but so long's she's here, she's got to be treated decent."

"Not a one of us 'ud fail in respect to a lady," spoke up one of the older lumberjacks. "What d'ye say, boys?"

A clamorous shout of "Naw" was the unanimous reply. Lenoir alone remained silent. Then he jumped to his feet, kissed the tips of his fingers, and exclaimed: "All ze same, by Gar, I love ze ladies!"

He dodged a rubber boot by a few inches, while from a corner, where Paltz was sitting, nursing his bandaged arm, rose the query: "What about the Injins?"

Chief Orlando, who had been sitting quietly whittling by the stove, rose, and said: "Strange woman is pale-face—no half-breed, and she safe in Indian camp as little papoose. She can go and come with the daughters of the Senecas, my people, when she likes. She is a friend of the Indian, and her path is safe."

Tom turned to him. "What do you know about her?" he asked indifferently.

“Mrs. Jimerson she tell one of my people that woman very tired, and sick—up here.” He tapped his forehead as he spoke. “Mrs. Jimerson she bring her from New York for her health. She pay for her food and shelter by making beadwork. Mrs. Jimerson say she like her, and she can stay long as she likes.”

There was no change in the expression of Tom's features during this recital. In thought, however, he was matching himself against the odds, calling forth every quality that could aid him in the test—the test to play the game white.

“All the same,” he remarked, “I wish she'd picked out some other camp. I got no use for women. I'd trade any one of 'em for a bottle of hootch. But she's here, and like the Crazy Kid's bitch, she's helpless. And she's got to be let alone.” He raised his voice. “I hope my meaning's clear, men,” he concluded sharply, and then stamped out of the bunkhouse, the Chief following a few minutes later.

After their departure, Paltz spoke up. “His meanin's clear to me all right,” he grumbled. “He wants this woman fur hisself.”

“Don't you believe it,” came in guttural tones from one of the bunks. “The Wolf hates the

sight of 'em, an' he'll run this woman out o' camp as sure as a log bumps down a hill."

Later, after his men had all turned in for the night, Tom sat alone in his log shack. Presently he walked to the window. A single light glimmered through the dark tracery of trees at Mrs. Jimerson's window. The significance of that light held him for a moment spellbound, then he turned away sullenly, with a smothered oath.

So far Anne had avoided meeting any of the woodsmen; she timed her rambles in the woods, and her excursions around the edge of the lake in Mrs. Jimerson's canoe, when she knew the men were engaged in swamping and felling. On rainy days she kept to the shack.

The white man's camp she viewed with a certain distrust. She had never forgotten the antagonism of the Wolf's eyes, and she had gleaned enough from her companion's gossip to realize that he was savage and cruel to his men; that they both feared and hated him; and that he had no use for women. This latter knowledge stirred her more than anything else. No doubt he was opposed to her presence in the camp. Secretly she longed for a chance to defy him; to return to him doublefold the hate and con-

tempt he had flung at her with his lips and eyes.

Little by little the influence of Mrs. Jimerson worked upon Anne's pliable nature. She seemed to thrive on this semi-barbaric life in the wilderness as if she had lapsed into a primitive state. She took no reckoning of time except as the sun rose and set; she would sit stolidly engaged in beadwork; and she ate only when she felt hungry.

Tanned by the elements, her dark complexion took on a deeper, duskier hue. She dressed now like Mrs. Jimerson, even to the bead-embroidered leggings, and wore her jet black hair in two plaits, with a fillet of wampum.

She never tired of hearing the Indian woman recite the legends of her people, and she picked up broken bits of her quaint language quite readily. Her needle flashed like a firefly, and her fingers were nimble at the bead-loom. In the daily output she outstripped any Indian woman in the camp.

"Wolf Killer very bad man," Mrs. Jimerson remarked one day as they sat stringing beads. "The Wolf go to House of Torment when he dies."

"I hope so," said Anne, vindictively.

Mrs. Jimerson believed that there were two roads in life: one to the Home of the Great Spirit, the other to the House of Torment, while Good and Evil spirits stood at the fork of the road. "Straight road not much traveled," she commented sagely; "evil road so much traveled grass will not grow."

Anne was sorry she had entered into the conversation, for she sensed that it would lead to an emotional outbreak. It had not taken her long to discover that under the stupid placidity of Mrs. Jimerson was a cankerous sore—the gnawing canker of revenge. In her heart was the mad desire to avenge a husband's death, and when she would give in to it, her emotions would run riot.

True enough, Mrs. Jimerson cast aside her work, and began to pace the floor. Then she squatted in front of the fireplace, and rocked her body to and fro, chanting mournfully.

Anne sought to calm her. "Why make yourself so miserable? Have you forgotten that we are to pay a visit to the Indian camp to-day?" Then she repeated what Mrs. Jimerson had once said to her: "Do not stir up revenge, for it will never sleep again."

The Indian woman really had the mind of a child in the body of an adult, and she soon responded to Anne's solicitations. Standing in the center of the room, she told an Indian legend of revenge.

"I will tell you story of Sa-geh-jo-wa of the Senecas, royal line of tribes, my own people," she began. "Many years ago, before white man hear great noise of falling waters at Niagara, Seneca nation had bad enemy, Illinois. One day Sa-geh-jo-wa and old woman they look for herbs in woods, and Illinois warriors took them captives, whipped them, drove them far into strange country. Old woman too weak. They tortured her, left her dying. She cried out to boy: 'Avenge my blood, and promise me that you will never cease to be a Seneca.' She died. Then boy said to Illinois warriors in his own language: 'I never forget what you have done to my people. I never forget the cruelty. If I am spared, you will lose your scalps.' "

Mrs. Jimerson spoke partly in her own tongue and partly in English, and her rapid yet graceful gestures easily translated her meaning to the listener, who sat entranced.

"Illinois warriors adopted Sa-geh-jo-wa," she

went on. "They little thought how deep the tortures had burned into his heart. He grew to be a man. He married the Chieftain's daughter. They thought he had forgotten, but in his heart were ever fresh memories of his wrongs—and wrongs no Indian ever forgets." There was a flame in her eyes as she spoke. "Again the Illinois went against Senecas in battle. The man, in whose heart burned revenge, led the warriors. And he betrayed them, led them to their death. Three hundred scalps was glory enough for Sa-geh-jo-wa. To this day his name is honored among the Senecas."

The recital seemed to relieve Mrs. Jimerson. Later in the day she accompanied Anne on her first visit to the Indian camp. On their return Anne walked in advance of the Indian woman. The tang of the wilderness, of the primitive, was all about her; there was new red blood in her veins, the result of rarefied air and the healing of out-of-doors. She had looked into an Indian's heart, and there she had seen the avenger of blood; she had heard the lament of the Senecas, cheated and despoiled. And over all was the terrible shadow of the Wolf Killer, this unlettered Czar of the timberland.

From a rise in the ground she could see the lumbermen at work; strong, hairy men playing with the giants of the forest as children play with toys. Suddenly above the distant hum and rattle of the cable drums she heard the warning shout of "Timber!" A tree crashed to the ground. A moment of silence followed; then the wood echoed with shouts of alarm.

"Something's happened." She expressed her fear to Mrs. Jimerson, who had just caught up with her; and in spite of labored breath, the Indian woman hurried on to investigate. She returned about ten minutes later, and between gasps and puffs, said: "Big tree fall on Crazy Kid, kitchen boy. Man says Crazy Kid done for."

Anne shrugged her shoulders in a disinterested manner, and picked up the trail to the lodge. Then the thought came to her—what could these men of the forest know about first-aid to the injured? In her mind's eye she could see the helpless lad, crushed and bleeding. She would break down the barriers of aloofness and go to his aid at once; and she would allow no obstacle to keep her from what she now considered her duty.

Her unexpected appearance in the logging



camp came like the bursting of a bombshell. Several of the men directed her to the bunkhouse, where the injured boy had been removed; and one of the lumberjacks got so excited over the turn of events, and in running forward and opening the door for Anne, as for a queen, that he barely escaped swallowing whole his quid of tobacco. Mrs. Jimerson brought up the rear.

The Crazy Kid lay moaning in pain and delirium in a lower bunk as Anne entered. The men with one accord fell back. As one of them expressed himself later: "Dammit, if I didn't think it was one of God's angels droppin' down on us, bin so long since I laid eyes on a real woman."

Anne knelt beside the bunk, and smoothed back the tangled hair. One of the men came forward. "He 'pears to be dyin', ma'am," he said hoarsely.

"A basin of cold water, quick," she ordered, "and some hot water, too."

Several of the men pitched in to help Mrs. Jimerson, including Lenoir, who brought the hot water in a jiffy.

A hasty examination and Anne found that the lad's left arm and shoulder were the most severely injured; his arm lay limp by his side.

Ripping away part of his shirt, she bathed his shoulder and arm, applying liniment and using the bandages. There did not seem to be any bones broken. He might be internally injured, but from his actions she believed him to be suffering mostly from shock.

He responded quickly to her treatment. Presently he lay quite still. When she felt sure the boy had fallen asleep, she took a more intimate view of her surroundings.

She tried not to appear conscious under the battery of eyes, and returned the piercing glances of the loggers with a look of confidence in their rugged manhood. One man alone stood out as repulsive. She cringed a little when Paltz, the blacksmith, came forward.

“’Scuse me, ma’am,” he said gruffly, “but we’re all much obliged to you fur what you’ve done for the kid. But he’s plumb nutty, an’ better off dead.”

“Naw!” came in a whispered chorus.

“Waal, anyway,” Paltz continued, “it brought you down to the camp, an’ I must say, ma’am, that jist lookin’ at you is sure some treat.”

A burst of remonstrance followed this speech, and Paltz was pulled back by several of the men. Then the room grew suddenly still. Mrs. Jimer-

son glanced at the door, and gave a warning grunt—"Ugh!" Anne sensed intuitively that she was once more about to face the Wolf. She was sitting on a box by the boy's side, with her back to the door. Her blanket lay loose around her; the glory of her dark tresses, the tanned richness of her face, with its sharp-cut profile, shone refulgently in the glow from the fire. She heard the heavy tread of boots as the Wolf walked to the center of the room; she could feel his eyes upon her. Utterly ignoring his presence, she leaned over to adjust a cold bandage around the sleeping lad's head.

The Wolf advanced another step or two. Anne half-turned round. "Quiet, please!" she commanded.

"Guess you don't know who you're talking to." Tom broke the tension with an angry flush mounting his cheeks.

"I can make a pretty good guess," returned Anne. Then she waited almost breathlessly for his reply.

"You got no right here," said Tom decisively. "We can look after the kid all right. What d'ye say, boys?"

There was no response from the men, only surly looks. Tom was quick to realize that he

faced a wall of rebuke in their sullen silence. It seemed to intensify his brutish, aggressive quality all the more.

“I say—get out—damn you!”

The words were no sooner spoken than Anne shot up from her seat. “Have you no consideration for this boy?” Her lips were white and drawn as she faced him.

“You got no business here,” Tom came back at her; “and nobody comes to this camp unless they’re invited. This is my land, and my word is law. We don’t want any strange women hanging round here, so you better vamose.”

Anne wavered in livid anger. “I was told that you were savage, cruel,” she exclaimed, “but no one ever told me you were a coward. These men fear you. If they didn’t, they’d stand up now to defend me, a woman, against your cruelty and insults.” She was approaching him step by step. “I’m not afraid of you, and I’ll prove to them that you are—a coward.”

With a sudden movement, she raised her hand and struck him full in the face. “You coward—you brute!” she exclaimed. “You can’t drive me out of this bunkhouse. I’m going to stay by this boy’s side until he is past all danger. If he dies, his death will be at your door.”

The Crazy Kid, aroused from his sleep, started up in his bunk, then sank back with a cry of pain. Anne was by his side instantly. She smoothed his forehead, his hair, and kissed him upon the cheek. Presently he lapsed into repose, holding her hand in a tight, appealing grip.

Tom stood with bowed head, in the hot flush of shame, with bitter scorn for his own lack of judgment. By one swift stroke of Fate, his leadership, his domineering brutality, had been undermined. Insubordination among his men was something he had ever feared.

He faced them now, cowed, stripped of his robes of dictatorship; he had been whipped by a woman.

Turning upon his heel, he slouched from the bunkhouse, a man without courage. He flung himself out into the silence of the camp as night swept swift-winged about him. He walked on aimlessly.

After a little he came to himself. The crackling of dead leaves caused him to turn suddenly. Paltz was close upon his trail. Even at this distance he caught the gleam of the torch of battle in the vengeful blacksmith's eyes. Then he saw red; while in the back of his head a small, still voice cried: "Kill!"

They fought like two starved wolves over a morsel of meat. They charged, and counter-charged. The frozen ground was torn up by their hobnailed boots. The wind died down. The silence of the woods was broken only by the shuffling of feet, deep, labored breathing, and smothered oaths. The blood began to trickle from the blacksmith's nose. The sight and smell of blood seemed to goad them on. It was a battle to the death.

Tom, with a powerful blow, finally gained the advantage over his opponent. The beast was in his fists, the beast that knows or shows no mercy. A well-directed blow over the heart sent the blacksmith staggering. He came back fiercely, but Tom met his approach with a rain of uppercuts that brought a heavy groan of pain. Paltz caught at the air, then fell like a log upon the hard earth.

Tom stood over his prostrate body with a triumphant glitter in his eyes. Paltz struggled to rise, then sank back in a sitting position.

"The woman's mine now—you understand?" roared Tom.

Paltz turned up a bruised and blood-stained face. "I'm licked," he muttered; "she's yourn." Then he curled up on his side, groaning.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MOUTH OF HELL

**T**OM paced his lonely shack in strange restlessness, as the thoughts of the woman desired fired his soul. She belonged to him now by right of conquest, and yet somehow she had stripped him of all his power. The sting of her blow in the face had come like the lash of a whip.

He stumbled out again into the night, with signals of breaking dawn leaping from the distant line of mountains, and did not stop until he stood within a stone's throw of the darkened cabin that sheltered her. The very mystery of her seemed to drive him to desperation.

He returned to his shack just as a streak of dawn came up the valley and touched his face as with fire. The woman triumphant had conquered his soul. The supremacy of his life in the woods meant nothing to him now. He cursed himself for his weakness, and laughed; a laugh that left him with the agony of pain.

In the days that followed, Anne carefully avoided meeting him. She nursed the Crazy Kid back to health, while the woodsmen, with torn shirts to mend and bruised and lacerated fingers to bandage, claimed her attention and sympathy.

The more she thought of it the more she became convinced that the Wolf was entirely within his rights in his rebuke to her. She was an interloper, and the very roof that sheltered her was his own. Mrs. Jimerson held no rights in the lodge; she simply camped there in defiance of the man, and paid no rent.

She recalled his exact words. "Vamose" meant to go. Where could she go? She shuddered. And finally a feeling of dependence, of protection, in this strange specimen of man, suddenly engulfed her. She had blundered. She had erred in her judgment of him. He had struck the right key; it was she who had lost the true sound, and broken the harmony. The men had endured many wrongs at his hands. She realized, in justice to the man, that it was necessary to hold them in leash, to beat their unruly souls into subjection. And now the tables had been turned against him. She knew these woodsmen hated him to a man. Distrust and treachery



were in the very air. Her intuitiveness sensed it as the fox scents the oncoming of its doom. Like dogs they were biting at his heels. Had her mistrust of the man, her blunder, been fatal?

These were some of Anne's thoughts as she stood silently in the path, midway between the camp and the lodge. As she turned to retrace her footsteps to the lodge, she glimpsed indistinctly a movement in the camp that immediately aroused her curiosity. She walked ahead a few paces, then paused; and again concealing herself, strained her eyes through the mass of spruce green.

A heavy mist, rising from the lake, was fast cloaking the camp. She saw the men filing into the bunkhouse, in twos and threes. It was too early for supper. The Wolf, she knew, had gone into his cabin. Knowing his attitude of constant watchfulness over his men, it occurred to her that they might be calling a meeting without his sanction.

She remained in this position for half an hour, with distrust of the men growing by leaps and bounds in her heart. Yet the smoke from the cook camp showed that Lenoir was slapping up the evening meal, and she espied the Crazy Kid,

hurrying across the open space near the bunk-house, carrying an armful of cordwood.

A splash of rain caused her to seek cover. Just as she reached the lodge, the floodgates of the skies seemed to open. Then for two long days it rained incessantly. The camp lay dismal and deserted; not a man to be seen.

Anne felt her incapacity to do things, and grew restless under the drab monotony of rain, which was dissipating the winter's snow and tearing great gullies in Mrs. Jimerson's acreage. It trickled through the roof; the damp logs refused to burn, and the smoke blew down the chimney in choking gusts.

. . . Suddenly, out of the mist of rain, she espied the Crazy Kid approaching the lodge from the side. He appeared to be covering up his tracks, advancing cautiously, with frightened backward glances. She welcomed him as the first connecting link with what had been transpiring in camp during the rainy spell.

"You saved my life, Daughter of the Moon," he was saying now, "for which I thank the sun and the stars. And the Wolf, he save my poor dog from that wicked Paltz. I like you both. You are my pals. Lenoir he makes corncakes

that I like, and he gives me plenty of molasses. But why does not the big yellow moon and the star come together?"

Anne smiled knowingly. "Tell me about Paltz," she urged.

"Paltz he bring all the men to bunkhouse two days ago while the Wolf stay in his cabin," the lad replied. "Paltz he make ready to go off in rowboat down the rapids, with Indian guide, to get police."

"Police?" Anne echoed eagerly.

"Paltz say the Wolf strike him on arm with iron rod when he save my dog, and he can work no more. So he get police and send Wolf to jail. And then, you see, Paltz he will be boss of the camp—of me and you."

There was a little crescendo of anxiety in Anne's exclamation of alarm. "Yet you say Paltz is still in camp?"

The Crazy Kid gave a ringing laugh. "Paltz he sneak out in rain to get rowboat, and all ready to start, but boat will not go. Oars gone. The Wolf he hide 'em. That made all the men very mad. They decide to work no more for the Wolf. They all quit."

"Mutiny!" Anne said under her breath.

The boy continued: "Wolf he shut himself up in his cabin, and he dare the men to do their worst. He threaten to shoot anybody who comes near. But Paltz and the men say they going to get him." He held out his hands in a piteous appeal. "The Daughter of the Moon must help the star get away from the black clouds. You must help Wolf. If he is killed, then Paltz kill my dog." He burst into tears.

Anne sent the Crazy Kid back to the camp, with instructions to keep his visit to her a secret; and in the advent of an attack upon the Wolf in his cabin, he was to signal with a pine torch.

The signal came about eight o'clock that night. Simultaneously she heard several shots, and then the loud voices of men. She made her way toward the flaring signal, feeling her way by instinct. Somehow she seemed to possess the instinct of the savage that leads through trackless places as unerringly as the compass of a mariner points the course through uncharted seas.

The Crazy Kid saw her, and hastily extinguished the torch. She stood waiting for him to come up, listening anxiously to every breath of the night that was likely to bring further news. Just as the lad reached her side, she thought she

heard the murmuring of voices, this time in the direction of the lake.

"They've got 'im," moaned the Crazy Kid. "Now, Paltz he kill my dog."

"Where are they taking him?" she asked tremulously.

Again that murmur of voices; this time more distant.

"They're taking him to the lake," said the boy. "He's bound with ropes. I heard Paltz say they mean to tie him to a raft, and send him over the falls, down into the rapids."

Anne shivered. No one could survive the falls, called the "Mouth of Hell," by the Indians; and even if the Wolf outlived the falls, he would be dashed to death in the rapids. She trained her ear in the deep silence of the early evening. Only the sough of the wind in the tall cedars could be heard.

"Where's Lenoir?"

"Cook locked up in the kitchen camp," came the agitated reply.

"Go to Lenoir at once," Anne ordered with a slow, deliberate voice: "release him, and tell him to come to the lake, to the sorting-jack. I'll be waiting for him there. You understand?"

The Crazy Kid pointed skyward. "See, the moon has chased away the black clouds from the star."

The clouds had parted; and far above shone the glimmering light of one star.

"Maybe if Paltz gets to be boss you'll need this." As he spoke the lad drew a small knife, sheathed in leather, from his pocket. Anne accepted it tremblingly, and thrust it under her girdle.

They parted, the Crazy Kid making his way stealthily to the kitchen camp, while Anne started off to find the path to the lake. It was now a race to win. She stumbled on, losing the path, then finding it again; and so on and on, with one thought in her mind, to undo what she had done, to save a man helpless against the onrush of grim fate.

She paused as the grayish waters of the lake stretched out before her. The wharf of planks and logs was black with men; they seemed like spectral figures in the dim light of the clearing night sky. She could hear the muttering of voices above the swish of the water upon the pebbly shore, for the lake was pulsing and seething from the great flood. Cakes of ice, logs and

trees, torn from their roots by the relentless mountain streams, were swirling toward the falls and rapids.

She stood in breathless deliberation. She dare not risk being seen. Creeping close to the ground she made her way toward the sorting-jack. She was close enough now to see what the men were doing, and to distinguish their voices. She heard a deep voice, that sounded like Paltz's, cry: "All ready! Let 'er go!" Then something blackish shot from under the side of the wharf. It was the raft with its human freight.

Shuddering, she waited until the men filed back to camp, keeping her eyes upon the raft, floating slowly toward the center of the lake. Determined to defeat the cruel and cowardly act of the loggers, and without fear or thought of self, she crept down to the deserted wharf. Beached underneath the near end was Mrs. Jimeron's canoe. With strength she never dreamed she possessed, she dragged the canoe from under the wharf.

The clouds had rolled back like a scroll, and the myriads of stars made the grim waters and the distant raft dimly discernible. She put all of her latent strength into her strokes as the canoe shot

out upon the troubled waters. She had not gone far when she heard voices on shore, and she was barely able to distinguish two figures running along the edge of the water. Lenoir and the Crazy Kid had come too late. She was headed downstream, and she had the intuitive feeling that they were following her trend.

Five minutes of tense, steady paddling, and she was within easy sight of the raft. She could even discern the motionless figure stretched out upon it. She gave a cry of assurance, and above the splash of her paddle she thought she heard a reply. Then came a louder and stranger sound; at first it was only a sigh, then it increased into a hissing, and finally became a roar. With sickening dread, she realized that the raft was fast approaching the falls—the Mouth of Hell.

The canoe had been caught in the swirling, swollen current, and was being carried swiftly downstream. All around her were cakes of ice and the floating debris of a flood. The next moment and the canoe was whirling around like a cork; the ice and logs threatened to crush it. She tried to paddle against the rush of water; and as she did so, she saw that the raft had become



lodged against a ledge of rocks at the brink of the falls.

Her aim now was to steer the canoe clear of the ice and logs and reach the raft. There was a chance of being marooned there until help came. Before she could shift her position and use her paddle for this purpose, the canoe was picked up like a toy and pitched sidelong against the rocks. Here it became wedged.

The raft was only a few feet away. Creeping cautiously to fore, she reached over the side of the canoe, and catching hold of a protruding rock, half crawled from the boat. Judging the distance at a glance, she made a leap and landed upon the raft, which, with a sickening, sinking feeling, gave in to the added weight of her body. She held on to a chain, while the icy water and rising spray drenched her through. Terrorized, she saw the canoe, relieved of its burden, swept over the falls. The roar in her ears was deafening.

She drew herself up alongside the Wolf, who lay upon his back, his arms and legs bound by ropes to the planks. She called to him, but there was no reply. He lay motionless, like a dead man.

Then she remembered the knife, and taking it from her girdle she unsheathed it with her teeth and one hand. While the raft listed to this side and then to that, and the mad waters tugged and tore at it, she sawed at the ropes. But it was not until she had freed his arms that he opened his eyes. He sat upright, gazed at her as in a dream. Instantly, he seemed to sense what she had done and the danger they were in.

All at once, Anne's strength failed her. She felt the Wolf's arm close around her. He had caught hold of the chain with the disengaged hand. "Hold on to me!" she heard him say. His voice sounded far away.

She drew herself up closer to him, clung to his wet body with clutching hands. She could feel his labored breath upon her face, wet with spray.

At this moment, the raft swung round broadside to the current. There was a creaking of timber, and a straining of the chains. "God help us!" Tom's voice rose clear and distinct above the roar of waters.

As the raft was swept over the falls, Anne experienced the dizzy sense of being caught up in the air, then ground under a smothering rush of water. She never lost consciousness, and her

hold never relaxed; it was the clutch of death. But they were miraculously spared from death. Tossed about in the tumbling waters, the raft was shot up clear of the rapids, and thrown upon a shelving edge of rocks.

What happened after that was only faintly heard and seen by Anne, for the reaction had set in, and it seemed more terrible than the actual danger. She knew that Lenoir and the Crazy Kid had reached the foot of the falls in time to carry her up the rocky slope; and that the boy had wrapped his coat about her shoulders to keep her warm.

“When ze men come back to camp,” Lenoir was telling Tom, “Paltz he try to be ze boss. Zay kick him out of ze bunkhouse, zip-bang! Ze men veery, veery sorry for what zay done.”

As he concluded, the dark rocky defile echoed with the shouts of the approaching, conscience-stricken loggers, shouts that inspired confidence once more in the breast of their deposed leader; while the light from their lanterns and pine torches illumined the walls of gray stone and the whitish, churning waters.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE LIFTING VEIL

**T**HE morning dawned crisp and cold, with fantastic figures of frost on Mrs. Jimer-son's windows. At noon there was a light fall of snow, and the trees stood gaunt in draperies of purest white. Real winter had come at last.

Anne had started out early for the Indian camp with a basket of provisions. She had come out of her trying experience without scratch or bruise, and Mrs. Jimerson's home remedies had saved her from the serious complications that often follow exposure. She was bundled up to the ears, for the air was snappy, and as she hurried along, the Wolf seemed to follow her like her shadow.

And all the time she was thinking of him, a voice kept repeating somewhere in the back of her head: "You are not for him—not for any man." Yet she lived through again and again

that moment, as they were poised on the brink of eternity.

Stooping, as she passed under an evergreen archway, radiant with frostwork and glistening like silver in the morning sun, she raised her eyes to find the Wolf standing in her path, cold and unmoved. A moment of tense silence ensued, then she said the first thing that came to her: "Do you always start to work so early in the morning?" And after she had said it, she thought it a rather foolish question.

"This is late for me." Tom smiled as he spoke.

"Oh!" she gave a little smothered gasp.

"Anything wrong, ma'am?" he asked.

"Nothing, except that you smiled, and it startled me."

"I'm surprised myself," Tom admitted, "for I laid smiling away on the shelf years ago."

"I've always felt that there was some reason for——"

"For what?"

"For your being what you are," was the calm response.

"It's hard for a man to control his feelings," he said.

"I'm afraid I lost control of mine that day in

the bunkhouse. I'm very sorry now for what I did."

"I didn't mind the slap, ma'am," Tom rejoined; "it was what you said."

"I was unjustly cruel," Anne admitted.

Tom had leaned his axe against a tree. He took off his glove, and extended his hand. "Ain't you going to let me thank you for what you did the other night?" Adding, as she hesitated: "God, that was some nerve! I never thought it was in a woman to do a thing like that."

Anne touched his hand lightly. He looked at her curiously. "Afraid of me?" he asked.

"It was not so long ago that I not only feared but hated you," was the reply.

"Was it hate that sent you out in the canoe to save me?"

"No; just an overpowering sense of duty—and pity."

"Pity, eh?"

"Yes; in your extremity," Anne responded. "It didn't seem fair to me to send a man, no matter how cruel and despicable he had been, to his death, without a chance of defending himself. It seemed so unlawful."

"There ain't no law in the woods, ma'am," said Tom. "The best man wins."

"I see you still hold a very high opinion of yourself," Anne put rather sharply. "Besides, I was under the impression that the woods, the great out-of-doors, made men more charitable in their views on life."

Tom shook his head. "We make our laws to suit ourselves," he declared. "Here a man stands or falls by his own character. When a man is imposed upon he fights back to get even, and he's got to use his fists or a gun. What may seem cruel to you is second nature with me. As a woodsman, I've been imposed upon by big men of money in the cities, and the treatment I got from them is the same I hand out to my men. I've had a rough deal, and I got to take it out on somebody."

"I hope you will never have to pay a debt of ingratitude to a woman," Anne ventured cautiously.

"I've held a grudge against a woman, a girl, for some years," Tom replied.

"Who was she?" Anne asked eagerly.

"I knew you'd ask that," Tom grinned. "And

I'll tell you if you tell me who you are. That's square, ain't it?"

Anne shrank back as if pained. "Please don't ask me that," she begged. She pressed her hand to her forehead. "I know this much, that I—I've always been a good woman—" there was a pathetic little break in her voice, "and that I'm white."

"Well, up in these parts, nobody makes it their business to care a damn about anybody's color or morals." As Tom spoke, and rather unguardedly, he leaned over to pick up his axe. When he looked up, Anne had slipped away quietly over the carpet of snow. He followed her down the path. She stared at him in silence as he stood bare-headed and half-ashamed before her.

"Don't leave me like that," he pleaded. "I know you don't belong to my kind, and you must excuse me if I talk a little rough at times. I ain't a pious man, and I certainly ain't got no tact with women. I guess that's why I lost the other one, and I've been soured on life ever since."

Anne regarded him a moment with cool reflection, then she said: "I value your friendship, Tom Goodheart."

He looked at her in frank amazement; it was



the first time she had called him by his right name.

“I’m sure we shall be friends always,” she went on softly; “but there is something you should know, and I tell you now—that I am not for you—not for any man.” She repeated the words automatically.

Tom stood fumbling nervously with his crownless hat. “I ain’t much on being just friends with women,” he said; “but I think I ought to know your name.”

Anne looked at him surprised.

“If you’ve no objections I’d like to call you, Woman—just Woman.”

“I’ve no objections,” she smiled in reply; and she was gone before he could get in another word.

Whenever they met after that, Anne remained always the woman, veiled and resistant, but there came a day when she realized they both stood on dangerous ground.

March was going; rivulets, released by the melting snow, were dancing down the purplish ridges. The rapids, with lashing waters, seemed impatient for the spring drive of logs.

This particular afternoon they stood under a lonesome pine, on the far edge of the lake, where they had wandered.

"Seems to me you're growing more particular every day," Tom was saying, his eyes like glowing coals set in the face of some roughly-sculptured Viking.

"I believe in you—I trust you. Is that not enough?" Anne returned plaintively.

"No," thundered Tom. He looked at her steadily, his fists clenched. "Woman, do you want to drive me crazy?" he burst out.

Anne stood her ground; she had feared this hour. The violence of his passion was shaking this young giant of the woods like a storm that uproots trees, centuries old, and flings them aside like straws. Could she stand up much longer against it? Something in his eyes showed her that the time for pleasant and placid companionship had gone. The barrier of friendship that she had built was in danger of being broken down; she could no longer deceive herself or him.

"You wouldn't dare, Tom," she said as she looked him calmly in the eyes. And the effect of her confiding voice was electrical. Tom moaned audibly, and turned away.

Anne gave a little hysterical laugh. "I knew we couldn't go on like this." She turned as if to go.

"I'm sorry, Woman," Tom said huskily, following her. "I lost my head, I reckon." He threw up his hands. "I'm helpless."

"If you feel that way about it," Anne suggested, "perhaps we had better not see each other again."

Tom shuddered a little, then gave in mutely.

She had not expected him to give in so easily. "I realize that we can't go on like this forever. Our friendship has been such a beautiful thing to me, like a sunset, or a night sky filled with stars."

"You don't mean to cut loose altogether? You don't mean that?" he asked.

"That's up to you, Tom," she faltered.

Tom hesitated a moment before replying. "Suppose I promise, well, not to lose my head again?"

She glanced at him uneasily. "I'm almost afraid to trust you."

"No harm in trying," he returned lightly.

"I do need you as a friend," Anne added. Then a moment of silence ensued. She started off on another subject. "It may be news to you to know that I'm to be made a full-fledged member of the Senecas. I'm to go to the Indian camp

to-morrow if the weather is clear. They're going to dance. And, oh, I love those little Indian children so! They are like swift-footed deer."

"I like children, too," Tom sighed. "Often wish I had a son."

"Too bad you must work while I'm having such a good time," Anne put in, tactfully.

"I didn't say anything about working," said Tom. "I'd be a fool if I did."

"Then you can come, too?" Anne asked, innocently enough. "But remember, you are honor bound to keep your promise."

Tom held out his hand, and his eyes lighted up as Anne took it. He held hers firmly as he said: "I mean to do right by you, Woman."

Anne smiled. "Then we are still good friends?"

Tom did not reply, but the resolute look in his eyes said more than words.

The next day Anne paid her visit to the Indian camp, Mrs. Jimerson, ever her faithful companion, following behind in a little dog trot, to keep pace with her. She prattled away as they walked along the trail, mostly about the Wolf. She found it soothed her to express her confidence, her trust, in him. Mrs. Jimerson kept nodding

to this and that, and then she gave her a start by saying: "Chief Orlando he say heart of the Daughter of the Moon is free. But I say, she must be careful, so that she may go home with honor to the house of her husband."

Anne regarded her a moment in amazement. "But I'm not married," she protested. "Whatever put such a foolish idea into your head?"

"Last night Daughter of the Moon talk in her sleep," was the disconcerting response. "You call for husband and for young son."

"But no one is responsible for things they say in their dreams," rejoined Anne. "It worries me, hurts me, to hear you repeat such things. I love this life here in the wilderness, and I don't want to know any other life but this."

She hurried on as if annoyed, while the Indian woman kept other revelations to herself. For two nights she had sat beside Anne's cot and listened to the strange mutterings of people and things in a world strangely apart from this in which she dwelt. Highly superstitious by nature, Mrs. Jimerson had reached the conclusion that the woman was bewitched.

By the time they reached the camp, the clouds had rolled back, leaving a clear sapphire sky and

a warm sun. Anne was welcomed by Chief Orlando at the door of his lodge while the natives looked on with welcoming and admiring eyes. She wore for the occasion her gayest calico dress, a brightly-striped blanket, and a red fillet that bound tight her dark tresses. The red and the sheen of the armlets and necklace of beads brought out the rich tan of her complexion.

Tom marched into camp a few minutes after her arrival, and appeared disappointed, for he had missed her at the fork of the trail, a half mile back. She appeared not to see him, but she had a tremulous consciousness of his approach, and felt it like the closing in of four walls, from which there could be no escape. She avoided his glance when he came up.

Her growing weakness alarmed her. His very presence was quickening her heart-throbs, and sending the red blood coursing madly through her veins. She never lost sight of him, however, during the ceremony. He stood close by, like a tall, grim, pine tree. It annoyed her even when the smoke, shifting with the west wind, veiled him from view momentarily.

The ceremonial fire crackled, while flames of color shot from behind the bank of clouds in the

west. Anne was the central figure, her face and figure painted in fire-gilt, like a barbaric princess of long ago. The music of crooning voices rose above the accompaniment of a rattle. She heard the Chief speak in a loud voice: "Hail! Hail! Open your ears to what I have to say. The smoke of the fire bears our wishes to the Great Spirit."

After she had taken the vows of allegiance, the Chief made a pretence of slashing her wrist with his knife and sucking the blood from the wound. Thereupon all the members of the various tribes took a vow in which they pledged themselves to avenge any harm that might come to the newly initiated member. The ceremony ended with a weird and fantastic dance, in which all the women and children participated.

The valley rang vocal with barbaric songs. The thud of dancing feet, the sound of the rattle, the play of colors everywhere Anne looked—crimson, yellow, purple, and green, seemed to call forth all the latent barbaric restlessness of her nature. Finally, she stole from the confines of the ceremonial mount, under a screen of smoke from the smoldering fire. She cast about anxiously for the Wolf, but he was nowhere to be

seen. It was growing late. From one of the older Indian women, she learned that Mrs. Jimeron had departed some time ago, and that the Wolf had sauntered off in the direction of the homeward trail.

She hurried on, strangely stirred that he had left so abruptly. Before she plunged into the wilderness of stunted pine and oak, she paused and looked back, at the spectacle of the dancing figures silhouetted against the grandeur of descending day. She was one of these people now by adoption. She was a part of the silence and solitariness of the woods. More than that, there was a lawlessness rising within her which she could not overcome; a madness in her veins. Heretofore she had avoided the man whose brute strength was his only law. Now she was hurrying on wildly to meet him.

She came upon Tom at the fork of the trail, where he stood with arms folded, like a statue of bronze. She came up to him quickly. "Why did you leave me like this?" she asked breathlessly. "Why?"

Tom's chin was in the air, a faraway look in his eyes. "I reckoned I couldn't trust myself," he said. "I didn't want to break faith."



Anne moved uneasily, then laid her hand upon his arm. "I can't go any longer like this, Tom," she said. "I take back all I said to you yesterday. I see now the falsity of our friendship. I'm just a woman, Tom—a woman in love—with you." She paused a moment. "Now, you know!"

There was no hesitation on Tom's part. With a low cry, a cry of exultation, with veins hot and tingling, he clasped her in his arms, and held her so closely to him that she struggled for breath.

About them the stillness of the woods; the murmur of voices in barbaric chants had died out. In the gloaming, shot with pulsing colors, Anne raised her face to his.

"Just say 'I love you,' " Tom urged passionately; "that's where I like to begin."

She echoed the words, vaguely, as in a dream.

"You're mine now for keeps, ain't you, Woman?"

"I'm yours, Tom—forever."

He gripped her tighter with savage strength, and just as he brought her lips to his—she could feel the hotness of them, she cried out, as if in pain. She struggled against the brute force that was crushing her.

Wonderingly, he relaxed his hold; she lay

faintly in his arms. The change that he saw in her fairly frightened him. From a warm living creature she had turned limp and cold. She gazed up at him dazed. She took in her surroundings with eyes of alarm.

The veil had lifted.

She had regained control of all that had been held in subjection; and the release from the bondage of another's mind had come with the suddenness of the lightning's flash.

Out of the nothingness of the past had risen all the spectres of her humiliation and suffering. And her awakened mind began to function and to pick up the sequence of thought from the moment when thought had been broken off under the hypnotic control of the mysterious woman who had visited her in prison.

From afar she seemed to hear a voice say: "Once give yourself, your body, to a man, and all that you have suffered, all this punishment, will come back to you."

She stretched out her hand to feel the prison walls about her, to discover that she was surrounded only by the black shadows of stunted trees and underbrush. She looked up startled

into the eyes that were questioning her; she ran her hand over the bronzed, bearded face.

“Who are you?” she muttered. Then: “Please take me home. Gwennie needs me.”

She lapsed into a half-fainting condition. Tom, alarmed and anxious, gathered her up in his arms, and carried her to the door of the lodge. Mrs. Jimerson shook her head sadly at the sight of her.

“Too much excitement, I reckon,” Tom ventured. Then he lingered outside the lodge until Mrs. Jimerson stuck her head through the door, and said: “Daughter of the Moon sick in head again, but she get better to-morrow, maybe. Go long home!”

## CHAPTER XVI

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

**A**NNE HAMBLETON was herself again; the personality of Daughter of the Moon had passed away into nothingness. She had reverted to her normal condition without memory of the hypnotic state, in which she had forgotten all that it was suggested that she should forget. The hypnosis had been closed.

Everything was clear to Anne now, her real identity and all her former associations in life, but she had no facts to explain, or solve, the conditions of her return to her normal self. She felt perfectly well in every regard, and her entire experience while in camp was strangely dissociated from her conscious perception, but not destroyed.

She had awakened in a new world, and in the embrace of a strange man. At first she had thought him to be strange, but gradually the memory of him, and what he meant to her, came

back to her like the recollection of a sweet song that impresses itself upon one for life. His influence had been too deep to be touched by any mental dissociation. Tom Goodheart was as real to her as the glowing embers at her feet.

She was sitting before a bright fire of pine-knots. The picture of her life during the winter in the camp kept rising like isolated memories. Finally she began piecing them together, one by one. Then the despair of her former life engulfed her like a flood, and she rose and sought Mrs. Jimerson, who was standing over the Johnny cakes in the kitchen, to see that both sides were done a golden brown.

Mrs. Jimerson regarded her curiously. "Why you no tell me that you have husband and child?"

"I seem to have come suddenly to my real senses," was Anne's reply; "and now I have only a vague recollection of what I've been doing here. I remember you drove me to the station from the—" she stopped short. "I know that you've befriended me."

"You are bewitched!" Mrs. Jimerson exclaimed.

"No, not that," Anne replied with a wan smile. "I'm just a helpless, wretched woman that has

been cruelly imposed upon. I could not help pretending to be what I was not. I only hope I have not disgraced myself," she concluded, glancing towards the door where Tom had left her only a half hour ago.

"I know what you mean," said Mrs. Jimerson, flipping a Johnny cake. "I disgraced myself once on the boat from Maryville; I got drunk."

"You've been so good to me, Mrs. Jimmy," she said with a half-choking sob, "and I must still look to you for shelter and protection. Please say that you are still my friend."

Mrs. Jimerson hurried to her side, and taking her hand, began to pat it. "Indian never breaks pledge," she consoled. "Better have nice hot cup of coffee. Make headache better, maybe."

The stimulation of coffee seemed to make Anne feel more keenly her strange position. She walked up and down trying to untangle the present from the memories of the past. It was clear to her now that she had been living in the state of semi-savagery, and that she had lived and loved. But this man, this Wolf, she must dismiss him from her thoughts.

It was when she discovered the little silver cross and chain that the remembrance of the

woman who had visited her in prison came back to her so vividly. It seemed beyond all reason that this woman could spirit her out of prison and send her, with this Indian companion, to these uncivilized parts. Yet she had the occult sense that this had been successfully accomplished, and that the woman was serving out her sentence.

But what motive had prompted this strange woman to take her place, to set her free? Was she the real murderer of Rodney Webb? Here her whole current of thought changed. The stain and shame, all the grief and pain she had suffered, the renunciation of her rights as a mother—the mystery of it all, descended upon her like a black cloud.

The sentence of life imprisonment had been passed upon her. She was a fugitive from the law. She felt strongly now her moral accountability to the laws of the State that had executed judgment upon her.

What could she do? The alternative kept rising before her: to return at once and give herself up. To do this, or remain hidden in the wilderness. Finally she resolved to surrender herself to the authorities.

At that moment there came the distant baying of a dog in the loggers' camp. She gave a little clutching grasp at her throat. Perhaps the bloodhounds of the law were already upon her trail. A great fear possessed her, and she ran and hid herself under the blankets of her cot.

During the night, Mrs. Jimerson tiptoed into the little curtained enclosure and leaned over the cot. Anne's eyes were wide open.

"Well, it's got to come, Mrs. Jimmy," she murmured, "for better, for worse."

The Indian woman beat a hasty retreat to her bunk, drew the covers over her head, and lay there, shivering in fear.

A week went by, a week of mental anguish for Anne. She kept close to the lodge, and word had gone through the camp that she was ill. The Crazy Kid, and Lenoir, the cook, left bunches of spring flowers at the door. One day the loggers sent her a huge bough of dogwood blossoms. But Tom never showed his presence.

Could she ever be brave enough to tell Tom the truth,—to shatter his dreams? Much better that she go away without a word of explanation. She was not for him—not for any man. . . .

Two things happened at the end of the week



to distract Tom's thoughts: the sudden appearance of a strange man in camp, and the arrival of the boat, bringing provisions and the first news, in almost six months, of the outside world.

Tom was called from his cabin early in the evening—the day preceding the arrival of the boat, to interview the man who had stumbled into camp, after a day and night of privation and exposure in the mountains. Tom found him in the bunkhouse, partaking ravenously of some soup which Lenoir had prepared.

Tom saw at once that the stranger, a gray-haired man of ruddy complexion, was a man of education and refinement; he had the city stamp in his manner and dress. Later in the evening, after his strength had returned, the stranger explained that two days previously he had joined a hunting and fishing party at Maryville, and after a day and a night in the wilds, he had wandered from the camp, lost his way, and been twenty-four hours without food. He seemed greatly relieved when he found that he could return the next evening to Maryville by boat. By morning, he appeared to have recovered entirely from his harrowing experience.

It seems that the American Indian was one

of the old gentleman's hobbies. As it was too far to walk to the Indian camp, he begged to be allowed to call upon Mrs. Jimerson, to inspect her handiwork in the various Indian crafts. Tom readily complied, but sent Lenoir in advance to inform his Woman of their coming.

A stranger in camp. The news came with startling suddenness to Anne. She had been tracked into the wilderness. This thought shot across her mind.

Climbing up the rickety ladder to the loft, she secreted herself among the corn stalks and straw; and she found a convenient crack between two rough boards, through which she could view all that transpired below.

With fear and trembling she saw Tom enter first. She saw him glance around for her and sigh disappointedly. Then came the thunder-clap. The recognition of the stranger was like seeing someone long dead and buried, risen from their grave.

"Dr. Jex!" Her sight seemed to grow dim; her heart to stop still. But her senses rallied quickly, and she listened intently to all that he had to say. As he admired the beadwork, much of it her own handiwork, and proudly displayed

by Mrs. Jimerson, the impulse seized her to reveal herself.

The sight of him made her hungry for news. What had happened all these months during her absence? Had nothing been uncovered that would establish her innocence? Surely, truth would reveal itself in time.

The answer to her ceaseless questioning came sooner than she had anticipated.

After admiring the exquisite beadwork, Dr. Jex made a cursory survey of the cabin. When he turned to speak to Mrs. Jimerson, he found her in tears. The Indian woman had been in a tragic mood for several days, and she did not intend to miss the chance of parading her woes before the stranger. So she began to wail about her deceased husband, who had been killed by treachery.

The doctor seemed to take Mrs. Jimerson's grief very much to heart. "Poor woman!" he said, after she had left the room; adding: "Sometimes I find it hard to forgive life for its cruelty." He paused. "Of course this may not interest you," he resumed, turning to Tom, "but I had a very sad piece of news just before I left New

York. A very dear friend of mine, a woman, died suddenly in prison."

The panic came again in Anne's heart, although she had only half got the truth.

"In prison?" Tom inquired.

"Sounds strange, doesn't it?" was the response. "But a stranger, sadder fate for a good woman, I've never known."

"A good woman—in prison?" Tom repeated. "I reckon that does sound strange."

"Would you like to hear the story?"

"You bet I would," was Tom's reply. "News is scarce in these parts." Then he added: "What sent the woman to prison?"

"She was sentenced for murder."

Anne held her breath for fear she might betray her presence as the doctor proceeded:

"Last summer, I went abroad on an extended vacation, and naturally, I did not keep myself informed on what was going on at home. I wanted a complete change, and rest. To my horror, on my return six weeks ago, I learned that this charming woman had been tried and convicted for the murder of a famous editor, whom she knew but slightly. The affair was very mys-

terious, and she was convicted wholly on circumstantial evidence."

"And you believe her innocent?" Tom asked.

"Absolutely," was the reply.

"Couldn't you do nothing?"

Dr. Jex shook his head. "Her husband didn't seem to care, and even my letters to the prisoner remained unanswered," he went on. "When I visited the prison, she refused to see me. I learned that she had been acting strangely, poor woman. She worked as a seamstress, and rarely spoke to anyone. Her death came very suddenly—cerebral hemorrhage."

Anne's mind was reeling. She kept asking herself: "Is this only a feverish dream?" And so much yet to be revealed. Would she live to hear it?

"And when did she die?"

"Just a week ago to-day—late in the afternoon."

Anne remembered the day and the hour shudderingly; it was the hour the veil had lifted from her mind. It was true then; she had been under the hypnotic control of this strange woman.

"Reckon that husband of hers gave her a decent burial," Tom ventured. The story inter-

ested him tensely, because he rarely heard what was going on in the great, outside world.

“No,” said the doctor, to Tom’s surprise. “The night she died, a fire broke out in the prison, and her body was consumed by the flames.”

There was blank terror on Tom’s face. “My God, that’s terrible, ain’t it?” He hesitated before continuing, watching the nervous tension of the visitor’s face. “I reckon that brought the husband to his senses.”

“But he wasn’t her husband at the time of her death,” Dr. Jex declared. “Four months after his wife was sent to prison, and she was sentenced to from twenty years to life, he obtained a divorce, and a few days later married a Miss Sanderson.”

What followed this disclosure Anne scarcely knew, except that she clutched convulsively at the air, as if to save herself from falling. She had the sensation of being dropped through space.

“It’s still a case with many complications,” Dr. Jex resumed. “I hope in time to see her name cleared, at least, for the sake of her son.”

“Poor kid!” said Tom.

“He’s being looked after by the Senator’s aunt,

I understand," the doctor said. "Of course he's very young, too young to understand."

Just then Mrs. Jimerson entered the room, looking more cheerful. And it occurred to the doctor that he might be able to help her dispose of some of her handiwork.

"See here, how would you like to go to New York?" he asked her.

Mrs. Jimerson shrugged her shoulders. "Got no money," she replied.

The doctor turned to Tom. "Maybe you can help me out. Just as I was leaving town, I heard from a good friend of mine, an old lady rolling in wealth, who gives a bazaar in her town house every spring for her church mission. She knew I was coming north, and asked me to arrange to bring down some Reservation Indians, to make beadwork for her bazaar. I've already engaged several at Maryville."

"I stay home," Mrs. Jimerson chimed in.

"You got over an hour before the boat goes," urged Tom.

With an eagle eye for business, Mrs. Jimerson compromised. She would be willing to send a liberal consignment of the beadwork in care of the visitor, provided he paid something in ad-

vance. Dr. Jex willingly and generously complied with her wishes, and really paid more in bills and silver than the beadwork was worth. Tom had already refused to accept anything for his hospitality.

After their departure, Anne climbed down from the loft. Mrs. Jimerson gave one look at her and gasped: "You look like dead woman."

Anne smiled wanly. She was a dead woman. Then a strange light came into her eyes; she clenched her hands tight. Out of the ashes of the fire that had destroyed all evidence of the great hoax, she would rise Phoenixlike, to crush those who had crushed her. The same desire for revenge that had burned so long in the heart of her Indian companion was now burning in her own heart. Her better nature seemed to fight against the idea, but it struggled in vain. The truth of the Indian woman's saying came back to her: "Do not stir up revenge for it will never sleep again."

As Mrs. Jimerson set about to pack the beads, Anne had it out with herself in the confines of her little curtained bedroom. She had been duped. The remembrance of the sacrifice she had made for Grenville, and all that she had suf-



ferred in silence, came to her so vividly that it produced physical pain, as if she had been struck.

Nor was she now concerned about the solution of the mystery that surrounded Rodney Webb's death; that was a blank wall. The whole tenor of her being now resolved itself into that she had been cheated; and the single controlling impulse was to get even, to exact retribution upon those who had made her suffer.

The spark of savagery in her would not be downed, nor would it admit of any compromise. She was the victim of Fate. Get it over with!—that was the mad, driving thought. She was free now to go where she chose. Free! She mouthed the word with a little hysterical laugh. The next moment she shrank under a new terror. There would always be the danger of recognition. She trembled, her heart heavy with this awful dread. Then, out of the turmoil of bewilderment, a new thought occurred to her. Why not put herself to the test—now? If Dr. Jex did not recognize her in the garb of an Indian woman, anything would be possible.

Suppose that she took the boat to Maryville, and there joined the group of Indians Dr. Jex had engaged to go to New York for the bazaar?

Money was a necessary means to an end, and she had sufficient to carry her through, for Mrs. Jimerson had already handed over her share from the sale of beadwork.

The opportunity was ripe at her door to carry her plan into immediate action. Lenoir had been sent to the lodge by the doctor to fetch the beadwork, and Mrs. Jimerson had elected to accompany him to the boat. The camp was deserted to a man, which made the way clear for another adventurous idea. Hurriedly collecting her little belongings, and tying them up in one of Mrs. Jimerson's blue bandana handkerchiefs, Anne slipped out into the purplish twilight, her head enveloped in a blanket which trailed almost to her ankles.

She paused a moment to listen; all that she heard was the call of the blackbirds in the pine trees. It was as if Tom had spoken to her. Making a quick detour, she approached his cabin from the far side. The door was unbolted. She crept inside and fumbled about until she found a bit of paper and a pencil. On this she wrote: "I have a road to follow, and I must go alone. Good-by, Tom,—until we meet again." She pinned it on the wall over the fireplace.

As she passed out cautiously, the Crazy Kid's dog began to bark; but this no longer held her in the panic of fear. The ends of injustice had been defeated; no longer was she a woman hunted.

She found her way to the boat landing, obscured in the friendly mantle of dusk; lanterns were gleaming fitfully like fireflies on the dock. Stealthily she approached.

Turning, she espied several Indian women approaching. She recognized them as belonging to the camp, and one of them seemed to be ill. She joined them at the gangway, her face partly concealed by her blanket. She stepped aboard, only to come face to face with Dr. Jex. She met his eyes squarely, under the yellowish glow of an oil lamp, but she saw no gleam of recognition. It was a terrorizing moment, but it left her with the happy realization that all chance of recognition from any of her former associates was most remote.

She hid herself away in the dimly-lighted woman's cabin. The timbers creaked about her as the boat puffed its way downstream, like an asthmatic old lady climbing the stairs. She remained huddled in one corner; no one questioned

her. Presently she passed into the stupor of sheer fatigue; but her mind was not asleep. She kept repeating to herself: "I am not dead."

But sleep came to her finally; and she awoke to the radiance of a new day—awoke to wonder, for a blank moment, why she should be sitting among these Indian women. Then it all came back to her.

## CHAPTER XVII

### DEAD OR ALIVE?

**T**HE ancestral home of the Rawson Renwicks was a huge rambling structure of the French Renaissance period. A high, wrought-iron fence added to its dignified exclusiveness. Society had ebbed and flowed for many years, and the old mansion seemed to stand as a sort of bulwark against the changing tides.

Mrs. Renwick, its sole occupant, save for a large retinue of servants, was utterly exclusive, but very humane. She had given up much of her time and wealth to charitable projects since the war, for she had shared the common sorrow of the world. Mars, the grim god, had knocked at her door. The great portals had long ago been closed to gayeties. Pleasure sat disconsolate on the doorstep.

Once a year, however, she threw open her doors to the public, giving a bazaar in aid of the very poor of the parish of St. Jude's. There was

always a note of expectancy about these affairs, for Mrs. Renwick usually introduced something in the way of a surprise. Last season it had been a troupe of Hawaiian singers and dancers.

Lady Dawkins was wondering what the hostess had up her sleeve as she entered the house on the afternoon of the bazaar. In the entrance hall she ran across Mr. Puggins, who was just rushing away. He proudly displayed his purchase, a beaded tobacco pouch.

“Indians!” gasped her ladyship. “So that’s the surprise? How intensely American.”

They stood apart a while from the fashionable throng, and carried on a conversation, mixed with a little scandal.

“Yes, I propose to cut Iris dead,” Lady Dawkins was saying. “Why, only yesterday at the Plaza——”

“Are they back in town?” Puggins put in.

“Yes; and jolly well glad to get back. I hear they were practically ostracized at Palm Beach, and cut cold at White Sulphur Springs.”

“His divorce and second marriage, coming so soon after his wife’s imprisonment, was a tragic mistake. Public opinion is very much against him.” Puggins spoke in a serious tone.

Lady Dawkins sighed in agreement, then picked up the lost thread of conversation. "Only yesterday I heard some new gossip about Grenville. He's tired of Iris already, it seems. Little wonder, for she's a human iceberg."

"Another woman?" Puggins asked, screwing up his nose.

The dowager lady gave a glance over her shoulder before committing herself: "They say he's gone quite mad over this dancer, Paula Straluski, who's appearing at the Follies."

"By the way, what's become of their child, Gwennie?"

Another hurried glance over her shoulder, and Lady Dawkins replied: "The last information I had was that Honoria had placed him in a privately managed nursery, a sort of baby farm, somewhere in Jersey."

"I've always thought the whole Karley family was sort of cracked!" Puggins snapped. "The family is so old it's beginning to spoil. Grenville is crack-brained. I shouldn't wonder if he didn't kill Rodney Webb. He hated him, you know, like poison."

"Why don't you go to the police and tell them all this?" Lady Dawkins suggested.

"Useless, at this late day," moaned Puggins.

"Perhaps when Gwennie grows up, he'll clear his mother's name," remarked the dowager lady. "Of course we'll both be dead and buried then."

"There's one man in town who seems to be still interested in the case," said Puggins, "and that's Dr. Jex. He thought the world of Mrs. Karley. He says find the motive—and there was really none established at the trial, and you'll find the real criminal."

"I've always thought there was something psychic about the whole affair," Lady Dawkins said. "Rodney, you know, was a firm believer in psychic phenomena. I heard him discuss it. And Mrs. Karley told of some remarkable happenings along that line. I remember now, she spoke of a strange woman she saw in the crowd at her wedding, who seemed to have some influence upon her."

Puggins scratched his bald spot. Yes; he recalled the incident. "I had quite forgotten that," he said, "and I shall have to tell Dr. Jex. You see, he has established the fact that there was a third party to the mysterious crime, and this was not brought out at the trial. The doctor has proof that a strange woman called on Mrs.



Karley at the prison just before she was removed to Woburn. The records at the prison show that she was admitted on Pumpelly's personal card, but the lawyer has never recovered from that stroke sustained the day after the trial closed, and is too ill to be interviewed. This strange woman remained with the prisoner about a quarter of an hour. Now, who was she?"

"She may have been the same woman Mrs. Karley saw at the church."

Puggins tapped his chin with his forefinger meditatively. "By gad, that's a pretty good point."

"Call Dr. Jex on the telephone at once," Lady Dawkins suggested forthwith.

When the dowager lady finally entered the ballroom, the crush in front of the Indian booth was so dense that she found difficulty in elbowing her way through to the front. She saw three stolid, greasy-faced squaws engaged in lace-making, while a weazen-faced, wrinkled old man—somebody said he was the Chief, sat in front of a make-believe camp fire, carving wooden novelties. Then she noticed a young Indian woman in the rear of the booth, bending over a small bead loom. In the background was a painted

forest. Her curiosity satisfied, she started to look for Mrs. Renwick.

Anne felt the strange eyes upon her, and she was thankful for the quiet obscurity of her corner; but she was keenly alive to everything that was said and done. Her sense of watchfulness, bred of the forest, was aiding her in the deception she was practising. She had cultivated the immovable countenance of the Indian, which seemed to mask all uneasiness.

Her first definite note of alarm came at her recognition of Lady Dawkins. At any moment now Grenville and Iris, or Honoria, might show their faces in the crowd that was pressing in front of the booth. Would they recognize her as one risen from the dead? Or would they idly pass her by, as did Lady Dawkins?

Anne hardly realized the change that had taken place in her appearance. She had gone into the wilderness pallid and pinched, with features contorted by suffering and eyes dilated by terror. She had emerged transformed, as if the magic hand of sun and wind, with one master stroke, had painted away her former facial characteristics. Her cheeks were full, her eyebrows and lashes heavier and longer, her hair

more dark and luxuriant. Her lips were redder, and the sharp angles of her neck had been softly rounded out. There was a peachblow under her tanned, dusky skin. Her experiences in the wilderness had imparted to her that alert poise of the head; she walked with a buoyant spring; she had the agility of a panther, and yet she could creep along like any crawling thing.

So far, chance seemed to have favored her at every turn. She had met no obstacle in allying herself with Old Wrinkle Face, as the Chief was called, and his lace-makers. She had passed herself off successfully as a half-breed. Her handiwork had delighted the old man, who was no stranger to New York, he having already arranged to take a booth at the forthcoming sportsmen's show. They were all quartered in a cheap rooming-house in West Fortieth Street.

A touch upon the shoulder, and she looked up like a startled animal. "I'm sorry," she heard a soft, sympathetic voice say. The speaker was Mrs. Renwick. "But you must be tired, sitting so long, and one of the ladies suggested that you might like to take a turn at the counter. You're very attractive, you know, and it might help the sales."

Anne murmured something amiable, not articulate, and took her place at the counter. She had made up her mind now to look facts fiercely in the face, and to bow to the inevitable.

As she stood facing the throng, she felt like a wax figure in a glass case; drop a penny in the slot, and have a look. And yet there was a gleam of hatred in her eyes. She faced the world of men and women that had condemned her; they had looked down from the arena of life while she had been literally torn by the beasts. She was glad when she was relieved at the counter; and she had no sooner resumed her work at the bea-loom, when a familiar, grating voice caused her to look up.

Honorina and Iris stood at the booth. The aunt's voice brought up the chaotic past; every memory seemed afire. Anne bent over her work, showing a clean cut profile against the painted forest. Her heart was going like the beating of a drum. She felt their eyes upon her.

Honorina had purchased a bit of lace, and was waiting for her change, when her eyes fell upon the figure in the corner of the booth. They became fixed for a moment, Iris following the direction of the aunt's eyes. To Anne, it seemed as

if the room had gone suddenly still; the silence was tense. The recognition had come; the awful anticipation made her dread to raise her eyes. When she dared, she found that she had been a victim of her own fears. Honoria and Iris had moved from in front of the booth, and were standing with their backs towards her—talking with Grenville.

Anne shuddered as she glimpsed him in a flash. She noted how gray he had become, how emaciated and nervous. She did not realize until that moment what an object of terror and aversion he had become to her.

Just then Lady Dawkins came sweeping up, and passed Grenville and Iris without even a nod of recognition, although they both made a move to speak to her. Then she paused, and very haughtily listened to what Honoria had to say. Anne watched them furtively through the branches, like an animal ready to spring.

“My dear, won’t you have tea with us?” Honoria was pleading.

Lady Dawkins shook her head in the negative, and so firmly that the feather in her hat quivered. “Don’t you realize that what you are

asking me is impossible?" She gave a glance of disdain in the direction of Grenville and Iris.

Honorina looked pained at the cut. "But there's something I want to—to ask you," she went on. "I know it's foolish for me to think \_\_\_\_\_"

"Think what?"

"To think that Anne Karley isn't really dead," Honorina returned with alarm in her voice.

Her ladyship regarded her curiously a moment before replying. "Of course, she's dead," she said succinctly; "dead and buried." Then she left Honorina's side without another word.

Once outside, the aunt seized the first opportunity to say to Iris: "I saw it, and it frightened me."

Iris returned coldly: "Oh, you mean the likeness? the resemblance of that young Indian woman to—to Anne? You're foolish to let it upset you so. Anyway, don't speak of it to Grenville. It was only a coincidence, and impossible—impossible!"

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A GLEAM IN THE DARKNESS

**A**NNE felt greatly relieved after they had gone. That much was over with, and she had come out of an alarming situation unscathed. The rush of painful memories had now given way to curiosity. What had prompted Lady Dawkins to treat Grenville and Iris with such contemptuous disdain? Some disturbing influence was at work. This sudden turn seemed to throw her into the whirl of a strange, unexpected excitement that made her mind reel. She resumed her work with some difficulty.

A hedge of boxwood trees separated the Indian exhibit from the coffee booth. Mrs. Renwick had just stepped up to sample the coffee when Lady Dawkins joined her. They sat down at a small table in the rear of the booth, and a great deal that they said was overheard by Anne.

“I find that things in life always work out in a circle,” the dowager lady was speaking now. “For example, Grenville Karley is standing to-

day just where he stood before Rodney Webb's murder. He has worked around in a circle. He was unfaithful to Anne Karley, and now—well, Iris can never say that she walked into this marriage with eyes blindfolded."

"You don't mean——?" began Mrs. Renwick, apparently very much shocked.

"Yes;" Lady Dawkins interposed; "and the woman in question is here this afternoon, right in your own house. She's the beautiful dancer, Paula Straluski, who is in charge of the Russian tea room. Why, Grenville hung around her all afternoon. Everybody's talking about it."

"How very painful," declared Mrs. Renwick, as she finished her coffee.

"Honorina brought Iris and Grenville here for the moral effect, but it didn't work," Lady Dawkins resumed. "It just shows what stuff her nephew is made of when he allows her to keep the child in a miserable baby farm somewhere in Jersey."

"Oh, but I can't believe that of Honorina," said Mrs. Renwick. "She must be made to see the cruelty of such a course, if it is true. I'll speak to her about it——"

"Hopeless, my dear," said the dowager lady.



“Honorina is distraught. The worst ever has happened. Mrs. Bobbinet, who is looking after the grab bags, just showed me a copy of the *Evening Gazette*.”

“What’s happened?”

“Grenville defied the speed law on Pelham Parkway early this morning, had an altercation with a policeman—struck him, and dear knows what else.”

“But that’s the most ordinary occurrence nowadays,” Mrs. Renwick began.

“But there was a woman with him, my dear,” Lady Dawkins intervened; “Paula Straluski. Five o’clock, and returning from—where? *The Gazette* has the scandalous affair splashed all over the front page.”

That was the end of the conversation so far as Anne was concerned, for she had been again requested to take a turn at the counter.

She had undergone some indefinable change in a brief space of time. Her designs for retaliation up to now had been vague, but now they were definite, almost vitriolic. The startling information imparted by Lady Dawkins had become as a weapon in her hands.

A Punch and Judy show in the adjoining

room had thinned out the crowd. The other saleswomen had gone for a cup of tea, and she had been left in complete charge of the booth. She saw Lady Dawkins leave the coffee booth with Mrs. Renwick, and her departure relieved her from any further anxiety over detection.

Finally she said to herself: "I'll do it!" as though she had reached a decision. Turning she found herself face to face with the one woman she most desired to meet—Paula Straluski.

The beautiful Russian fingered the lace with her exquisite fingers, upon which gleamed the fire of the green jade. She spoke in broken English, with a decided French accent, which reminded Anne of Lenoir. At first Anne spoke only in monosyllables, then very tactfully broke the ice of reserve by making a remark in English.

"I am so glad you speak ze English," the dancer said languidly. "I dare say you make all zese pretty zings in your wigwam."

Anne smiled. "The Indian nowadays, at least the eastern Indian, lives and works like everybody else."

The dancer sighed. "How sad," she lisped, "for it destroys ze picture I had in my mind of ze American Indian. Please do not tell me

zat ze Indian woman loves, well, like everybody else."

"Love is the same, too," Anne admitted. "But hate—revenge! That's different perhaps. An Indian never forgets a hurt." Her eyes blazed.

The little barbaric flash impressed the dancer. "You are very severe," she said. "Has anybody wronged you?"

Anne replied indirectly. "I have suffered," she admitted.

"Are you quite alone in ze world, or are zese women your relatives?"

"I am alone, but not from choice. Everything that I loved has been taken from me." Her voice trailed into a pathetic whisper.

"You are not like ze others," the dancer went on. "I just see one of zem spit on ze floor. You are educated, you have manners."

Anne smiled in spite of herself. "The younger generation has the advantages of school," she rejoined. "The older people remain just as their forefathers were—savages at heart."

"Maybe I am what you call a savage at heart," the dancer remarked airily. "Only zis morning I wanted to kill my maid wiz ze hat pin because she went to ze movies wiz ze policeman. I don't

mind firemen or icemen, but ze policeman—zay are so common.”

“I’ve read that every woman has a little of the primitive savage still in her,” said Anne.

“Zat is ze truth,” was the response. “And how I envy ze simplicity of your life. Sometimes I grow very tired of ze managers, ze public, ze grand love affairs. In Paris I get what you call sick of ze men. I say to myself, some day I go and live wiz ze Indians. Once, when I was a little girl in Vienna, I went wiz my uncle to see ze great Buffalo Bill. But I find no Indians in New York, although my friends in Paris zay say plenty of Indians in Chicago. And now I come here, and make friends wiz ze beautiful Indian princess. Are you really an Indian?”

Anne pretended to feel hurt, and murmuring a few words in the Seneca language, walked to the other end of the counter. Mlle. Straluski followed her. “Please!” she said. “I like you so much. I want you to come and see me, to have tea wiz me, ze Russian way, wiz ze samovar.”

“I have no time for play,” Anne returned.

“How long will you be in New York, Miss ——?” she paused. “What shall I call you?”

"I am called Daughter of the Moon," replied Anne. "I'm a half-breed, and I belong to the Seneca tribe." She stood willing and ready now to perjure her soul to attain the desired end. "We expect to be in the city about ten days," she added.

"I like you so much, and I feel so sorry for you," Mlle. Straluski breathed fervently. "You can teach me many zings. I am all on ze surface, but you—you mask a thousand fears—love, hate, suffering, tears. Am I not right?"

"It's the truth, Mlle. Straluski," Anne replied simply.

"How did you come to know my name?" the dancer inquired in surprise.

"I overheard someone speak of you," was the reply; "and I remembered that I had seen your picture on a billboard near my rooming place. You do not wear many clothes when you dance?"

The dancer smiled. "I would be a pauper if I did not dress, or undress, to please ze poor tired business man. Oh, you must come to see me! I will show you my pretty clothes, my jewels, and maybe, my love letters."

The mention of the love letters brought a

dancing fire into Anne's eyes. "I'm afraid old Wrinkle Face would object," she parleyed.

Then an idea occurred to the dancer. She picked up the purse she had been admiring. "I will pay somezing down on ze purse, zen you can bring me ze purse and collect ze balance. Ze old pucker-face could not object to zat, surely."

Thereupon Anne agreed to come. "But you must see me alone," she urged. "I do not like to meet strangers."

The dancer gave a rippling laugh. "No fear," she said. "I would not trust my gentleman friends wiz a charming creature like you." She paid the deposit on the purse, and touching Anne's hand lightly with a "La, la!" and "Au revoir," walked away, leaving a heavy scent of "glorie de fleur" in her trail.

Anne stood for a moment transfixed in thought. The dancer had unwittingly paved the way for immediate, definite action. Love letters. . . . Grenville's love letters! With resolute lines of the mouth, she reiterated, half aloud: "I'll do it."

## CHAPTER XIX

### HAUNTING MEMORIES

**I**N the spring of the year come violent disturbances of the atmosphere, with thunder, strong wind, and sweeping rain. There is often the same startling sequence in the affairs of life.

It did seem as if, coincident with the first appearance of Anne Karley's ghost, a hidden spring had been touched, releasing a series of events that crowded one upon the other with amazing rapidity. Some subtle influence seemed at work on the mysterious death of Rodney Webb; certainly not the police. But the police were not to be blamed; they had done their duty, and the case had become a closed chapter at the Homicide Bureau, following the conviction and sentence. The business of the police is to make arrests; like busy millers they fling the suspected, and the evidence at hand, into the great hoppers of the law, and the grinding mill does the rest.

Public opinion, that great arena of judgment, had also been satisfied. Anne Karley had been given a fair and impartial trial.

But the police and the public had not taken into consideration that there is a third silent party to everything—the law of compensation, a sort of counterbalancing that acts as a gyroscope, and keeps life eternally in equilibrium. As Emerson once wrote: “Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty.”

And this is how it worked in Anne Karley’s case:

First came the change in public sentiment over Grenville’s second marriage before the ink was hardly dry upon his final decree of divorce. That he should forsake his wife so soon after the prison doors had been closed upon her, shook the public’s confidence. The *Evening Gazette* called it an unholy marriage, overshadowed by the deserted wife, who pined behind prison bars with all the world against her. Newspapers are often the tool of this third silent party in the compensation of injustice meted out to the helpless and innocent.

The blue-blooded Senator came out boldly in



his own defence, and attributed all the misrepresentations and lies that were being published about him as the malicious work of his political enemies.

Adverse opinion was just giving way to a more tolerant viewpoint when there came another shock—Anne Karley's death, and the horror of her body being consumed in the prison fire. She was now spoken of as a martyr. There was even talk of reopening the case, but nothing came of it. Once again public opinion rested, but the eternal principles were still at work.

Still another event, not so tragic, but tremendous in its effect. Rumors of a rift in the marital lute of the Senator and his second wife had been percolating into the public's mind through the published gossip of society. It proved to be a harmless little bomb of scandal. But harmless looking bombs often explode when least expected. The Senator was caught in the police net at five o'clock in the morning for speeding, and as Pelham Parkway is rather isolated, there was no escape for his fellow traveler—Paula Straluski.

In gloating over the affair, the *Evening Gazette* brought out the fact that the Sena-

tor's young son had been sadly neglected by the stepmother; that the child did not even share the comfort and luxury of the Park Avenue home, but was being looked after by strangers in a nursery, "the location of which is now being sought by our reporters;" to quote the exact words of the *Gazette*.

So the public had just about made up its mind that Grenville was not fit to hold public office, that he was morally deficient and an all-around rotter, when another sensation was sprung. This was on the morning following the bazaar at Mrs. Renwick's.

An anonymous communication was published in one of the more conservative papers, and the public received it in blank wonderment. The message read: "Rodney Webb did not die by a woman's hand." Very brief, but very amazing. It was a decided jolt. Steps were at once taken to run down the sender. Evidently a man's handwriting—a pencil scrawl on cheap note-paper.

Anne read it that morning at her rooming-house. She had no theories herself about how the murder was actually committed. It had come to her now and then that perhaps she had inflicted the death blow without being conscious

of the act; that she had been impelled in thought by another. Still, she remembered distinctly putting the fatal dagger back into place in the cabinet in the hall.

She had awakened to a gray April morning, not conducive to optimism. Once, in the agony of despair, she decided to go straight to the police, to give herself over to the law, but the madness of her design to retaliate kept down her more sober senses. The new stroke of ill-fortune to the house of Karley seemed to press her on to action.

What mystified her was the motive of the woman who had set her free and shouldered the punishment. Had this mysterious person paid the penalty for a crime which she had committed? Yet the message—and she had the occult sense that it had come from an authentic source, claimed that Rodney Webb had not died by a woman's hand.

Baffled, and tormented by restless thoughts, she left the rooming-house late in the afternoon, to try and walk off her depression of spirits, although she had decided to keep indoors until the time for her appointment with Mlle. Straluski, the following afternoon, at four.

The three Indian women occupied one large room; hers was a dingy, back hall bedroom. There was no attempt on the part of the other lodgers, mostly circus people, awaiting the opening of the summer season, to be sociable. So she kept to herself as long as she could. Her tense emotionalism needed something to feed on, and it finally drove her out.

She had equipped herself at Maryville with clothes for street wear out of her earnings, a cheap black suit and a black straw hat, a gray veil and gloves. So she melted into the mist that cloaked the city with a measure of confidence, wandering aimlessly about for a while in a section of the city that was strange to her. The dense traffic and moving throngs confused her. Still she had no fear of the crowd. Had not her fate been strangely altered by one who had come out of a crowd?

Yet her soul was fear-bound; she had no real liberty of action, nor the right to do; the power of self-determination was not hers. Law is fatal; she could never escape it.

She had been walking about half an hour when the haunted dread seized her that she was being followed. She made a pretence of looking into a

shop window, and then gave a frightened glance backward. The crowd passed her by unseeing; again she felt that she was a victim of her own fears. There was something familiar about this drug-store window, and she realized with a start that she was only half a block away from the Rembrandt. What was to hinder her walking past the tragic spot? Her innate curiosity was aroused; she could not hold herself back.

But torn between two other impulses she hesitated before turning the corner. One was to go into the drug-store, and try to find a nursery in the suburban telephone book; to take a chance on locating Gwennie. Then she decided that this might expose her to risk; she must abide her time. So she put into execution her second thought. Stepping up to the corner newsstand she asked for a copy of *Truth*, to find that it had stopped publication some months back. Simultaneously, came a chance disclosure, another forge in the chain of events. Prominently displayed upon the front page of an evening newspaper, was the announcement of an auction sale of Rodney Webb's personal effects; and it was to take place the next day in the apartment where the murder had been committed. There

had been a long delay over the settlement of Rodney's estate; everything he owned was mortgaged, and he died, neck deep in debt.

Thus circumstance contrived to send Anne direct to the Rembrandt; she felt irresistibly drawn to the place, and she walked into the entrance hall without fear. The house was shortly to be torn down, and all the apartments had been vacated. A placard at the front door announced the sale. A moving van stood at the curb.

A little, weazen-faced Irishman emerged from Rodney's apartment just as she stepped into the hall. He sensed at once that she had come to inquire about the sale.

"Shure, an' you'd better go inside, ma'am," he said as she stood hesitatingly. "To-morrow, I'll bet you won't be able to git within a block of th' house."

A large oil lamp, with a red silk shade, was burning on the table in the living room; it lighted the hall and adjoining rooms dimly. The familiar environment seemed to hold a strange fascination for Anne. She noticed that everything was in its accustomed place; the air was close and musty. Before entering the living room she ran her hand along the wall of the hall until it came

into contact with the cabinet; the weapons were still there, and the touch of cold steel gave her a sudden chilling of the blood.

She was standing in the living room when the van man reëntered. "Look around, ma'am, all you like," he said cheerfully. "You're the first visitor since I've bin 'ere 'scept a gintlemin, who was nosin' round a bit. You needn't be aferd."

"Afraid—of what?" Anne asked calmly.

The Irishman gazed at her in muddled surprise. "There was a murder committed 'ere, ma'am. Funny you didn't 'ear about it. Th' gintlemin 'e seemed to know all about it."

So saying, he walked to the door which opened into the former quarters of Wickers, the valet, and called out: "Assop! Where you kapin' yourself?" Retracing his footsteps, he said to Anne: "I was jist callin' the driver. He's a Greek, an' 'is name is Assopoulos. 'E hates work worse thin poison." Before leaving he roared out again: "Assop! Git a move on you."

After the Greek driver, who resembled a grisly bandit, had passed through the room, Anne stood in lonely ghastliness; yet she was amazed at her self-possession. Her labored breathing was the only sign of what was going

on inside of her. How intensely she had suffered! How bitter the recollections! There was no remorse in her heart, for she had not sinned; she had committed no wrong. Her only offence now was the evasion of the law. Yet as a ghost—the living counterpart of Anne Karley, who was dead and buried, was she not wholly outside the law? She had not thought of her strange position in that light before.

By this time she had walked into the dimly lighted library, with footfalls as soft as velvet. When she entered the gloomy drawing-room she lifted her veil; she felt secure. Only a narrow shaft of yellow light fell through the parted curtains. She stood still for a moment near the spot where Rodney had fallen in his death agony. Her nerves were tense, almost taut. The room was as still as death.

Then she heard the sound of voices on the outside, in front; it sounded as if the Irishman and the Greek were engaged in heated argument. She listened a moment, and then her quick ear caught the sound of voices nearer at hand—men's voices, in the library. She was uncertain what to do; to reveal herself might prove disastrous. Darkness was about her, so she remained per-



fectly quiet. The breathless moments that followed seemed hours.

First came a challenging voice: "What are you doing here?"

With a convulsive start, she recognized it as Grenville's voice. What was *he* doing here? The discovery of his presence was a strange, terrifying one. What it meant she did not then realize.

The second voice was unfamiliar; she tried to place it, but couldn't. They were conversing very low now, and she was able to catch only fragments of what they were saying. Presently Grenville's voice was slightly raised.

". . . be patient and listen to me," said the unfamiliar voice.

". . . you won't." This came from Grenville.

". . . everything—everything!" That was all she caught of the second man's response.

". . . if you do, by God! . . ."

". . . no right . . ."

". . . keep silent." That was Grenville speaking.

". . . tell the truth. . . ."

". . . worse for you." Grenville's voice was

threatening. Then came: "You know the consequences."

The voices stopped short.

Anne remembered the van-man had spoken about a "gintlemin" visitor; it had been Grenville, no doubt. But he had not mentioned a second person. Perhaps they had both walked in while the Irishman and the Greek were arguing between themselves.

She listened. Not a sound. Then a door slammed somewhere. At the same moment, she became conscious of another presence in the drawing-room. Simultaneously she recognized the man's breathing and the little nervous catch in his throat; it was Grenville. And he was groping about the room.

She had the advantage of sight, for her eyes had become accustomed to the gloom. She watched him plainly as he came up to the little gilt table from which she had taken the fatal manuscript. Her sacrifice had been in vain. How she hated him; how selfish, how cruel he was.

Unknowingly, in the tensivity of her thoughts, she had swayed a little to the front, which brought her face into the shaft of light. Her figure, garbed in black, did not show. It was only the

face that Grenville saw; and with a quick, smothered gasp, he crept out of the room. Just as he passed between the curtains he glanced back; the face had disappeared, Anne having stepped back into complete obscurity.

Pale and terrified, Grenville stepped out into the hall. He had looked upon the face of a woman who was dead and buried.

## CHAPTER XX

### SINKING SANDS

**H**ONORIA was keenly alive to the exigency of the hour; never had she been so thoroughly aroused. She had fooled herself so long with the idea that the house of Karley was as secure and as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar.

“We’re all of us helpless, in sinking sands,” she declared the day following the bazaar. She had called at her nephew’s house to have it out with Iris.

“I’ve never cared for Grenville in the way a wife should,” Iris admitted calmly. “It was a shock to me those first days of our married life to find that I didn’t. And you’re to blame.”

“Fault of mine?” Honoria gave a harsh laugh.

“You’ve been preaching Grenville to me for years,” Iris went on, “and somehow I got to see him through your eyes. It was your viewpoint that blinded me to the mistake I made in marry-

ing him after the infamous conduct of the first Mrs. Karley. Away from your influence and your belief in him, he stood stripped of every illusion. He's a beast."

Honorina flamed up instantly. "Why Grenville married you, heaven only knows! You simply flung yourself at him. You came in between him and Anne. From the moment he was married, you pursued him wantonly."

"You wicked woman!" Iris gasped. "How can you say such untruthful things?" She paced up and down in front of Honorina, who was seated, giving her a scornful look every time she passed her. Finally Honorina said: "Do sit down." Iris did so. Her glances grew less severe. Presently she threw up her hands. "Oh, it's maddening!" she exclaimed. "He never set foot in this house last night. He has never begged my forgiveness, as he should, upon his knees. He's probably at this very moment with that immoral dancer."

Honorina sighed deeply. "You must be more tolerant, my dear," she urged. "Tolerance is something every woman should pack in her bridal things. Affairs of this sort mean so little to men."

"It's only when they get caught that it means something," Iris put in.

The aunt continued to preach. "My nephew has had more than his share of trouble and worry. I'm fearful now that none of us can live down the ignominy of the past. It seems to rest upon Grenville like a curse. Ever since Anne Karley went to her doom——"

"You mean her death?" Iris interrupted.

"Somehow I can't make myself believe that she's really dead and buried." Honoria's lips twitched a little as she spoke. "Some evil influence seems to be at work against Grenville, against us all. Of course I never did the woman any harm, and yet I have this dread in my heart of some day meeting her. I have a horror now of being alone in the dark."

"Then you believe in ghosts?"

Honoria shivered. "Yes, I do believe in ghosts. The ghost of my aunt, a dear, fussy old person, kept visiting our old home until it was torn down. She would arrange all the books neatly on the table in the living room, place the chairs with their backs to the wall, and sweep up the ashes around the fireplace."

"Silly rubbish," Iris commented frigidly.

Then: "What's to be done? What shall we do to save Grenville—ourselves?"

"From Anne?" Honoria added swiftly. She was showing the strain of the last few days; the lines on her face had deepened, and the heavy blue marks under her eyes gave them a hollow look.

"Can't you get Anne Karley out of your mind?" Iris said, impatiently.

"It was the striking resemblance of that Indian woman to Anne that has upset me so."

"But it was only a coincidence," declared Iris. "Please pull yourself together, and give some thought to me—to my extremity."

"Quite right, my dear," sighed the aunt. "I have thought of a plan. That's why I'm here this afternoon, when I should be in bed. But first you must promise to excuse—I don't say forgive, Grenville for his weakness. At least, until we get him well in hand."

"Anything you say," was the hopeless rejoinder.

Thereupon Honoria presented her plan. "First of all, we must try and combat the distrust of the public. Your marital relations must become secondary."

“That’s unreasonable at the very start.”

Honorina motioned for silence. “Listen to me, please. I have the advantage of age, of experience. I’m sure we can win back the confidence of the people in Grenville if——” She stopped to illustrate her point by showing a newspaper clipping regarding the father’s seeming neglect of his young son.

“But what has this to do with me?” said Iris, after glancing at the clipping.

Again Honorina quieted her with a gesture. “This child, Gwennie, is invaluable to you both. He is the nearest point from which help in an emergency can come. You don’t seem to realize the dangers that confront Grenville. He may be impeached——”

Iris demurred strongly. “Why should I be called upon to assume any responsibility? The child is being well taken care of. You’ve seen to that yourself.”

The aunt avoided the questioning gaze. “The nursery is a very respectable place, and Gwennie is getting every attention. Of course, I’ve never been there, nor has Grenville, although he sends him toys and things. I really don’t think the child will live much longer. The last report I



had from the nursery was that he was suffering from pernicious anæmia. It's really very pathetic."

"Quite too pathetic for me," declared Iris; "and exceeding all bounds of reason that I should be morally accountable for his welfare, especially without his father's authorization."

Then Honoria spoke, and there was a fiery glint of defiance in her hollow eyes. "Just the same I've given orders that he shall be brought to this house to-morrow. I mean to look after him myself if you won't. We'll turn the extra room on the second floor into a nursery, and install a nurse——"

Iris sprang to her feet. "Is this my house or yours?" she exclaimed excitedly.

Honoria rose and faced her. "You foolish woman! Can't you see the peril we are all in? Something like the hand of God threatens to crush us, to destroy the house of Karley. I feel it closing in about us——" she paused as Iris gave a little quivering laugh. "Perhaps you don't know that suspicion is now directed towards Grenville for the murder of Rodney Webb," she continued. "There may be someone watching this house at this very moment. It was never

really proved that Anne Karley struck the fatal blow. The accusing finger is now raised——”

“Have you lost your mind?” Iris interrupted fiercely.

“No, I’m perfectly rational,” replied the aunt, with sudden self-control. “It was only recently that I learned that Rodney Webb had in his possession a paper which would have spelt Grenville’s political ruin. This paper established the motive for Anne’s visit to Rodney that evening. It was not brought out at the trial, but she went there to get that document, whatever it was, to save her husband.”

“Who told you all of this nonsense?” There was a light of flame-like green in the eyes of Iris.

“Grenville,” came the faltering reply. “The day after your first quarrel. You remember he got drunk and spent the night at my house? He knocked at my bedroom door sometime towards morning, said he couldn’t sleep, that he wanted to tell me something. I heard him out, but it was all indefinite. But it seemed to ease his mind. The next day he had no recollection of what he had said to me.”

“It isn’t true,” cried Iris. “Anne was the last person on earth to do a thing like that. And it’s

cowardly for you to make such an accusation in Grenville's absence."

"It's God's truth," Honoria came back; "and it has opened my eyes to the fact that she was a loyal and true wife to him. She martyred herself to save him. If this one fact had been disclosed she might have gone free."

"But it wasn't, so why should we worry our heads about it? I spoke the truth. I've nothing to fear."

"We perjured ourselves, every one of us," Honoria declared impulsively. She advanced a few steps towards Iris. "Don't be a fool. Have the conscience, like myself, to admit of prejudice, of perjury."

Iris challenged her. "I refuse absolutely to stand before the world dishonored through any act of yours or of Grenville's—that is, if things come to the worst."

"But we've got to sacrifice something, even truth," the aunt declared, "if we mean to carry out our plan successfully. And for goodness' sake, don't mention to Grenville what I've told you in confidence. Make it as pleasant for him as you can. He needs us both. But I must hurry off to make up my list."

"Your list?" asked Iris curiously.

Honorina retraced her steps. "I didn't mean to tell you until to-morrow," she purred, "but I'm going to send out verbal invitations for a dance on Friday night at the Ritz."

"A dance?" Iris echoed, stunned.

"Just another little plan of mine," responded Honorina, "as an antidote to the poison that is affecting the public's mind. We must show the world that you and Grenville are living in perfect harmony in spite of this scandal. We must allay suspicion."

At that moment Grenville walked in upon them unexpectedly. The aunt left the room.

He remained silent. "Well, is it quits? Or shall we keep up this sham a little longer?" Iris asked bluntly.

This sudden interrogation took Grenville completely by surprise. "Naturally, I can expect no sympathy from you," he said finally. "I don't ask it."

Iris disregarded the thrust. "I question if we can humbug the public much longer," she said bitterly. "Still, they say it's fatal to turn tail to a wild beast, or to scandal."

Grenville softened a little. "For the sake of

happier days," he ventured, "you might make some concessions."

Iris stood cold and unmoved. "I'm utterly selfish," she confessed. "I'm thinking only of myself. But what I've agreed to do, fortunately will serve your interests as well as my own."

Grenville gazed at her questioningly. "Agreement?"

"Your aunt has come to our rescue. She has a plan, and it looks very promising."

"Damn her interference!" Grenville's eyes blazed.

"You never did have the capacity to take punishment," Iris commented tersely.

"What's the agreement?"

"I've given my consent to have Gwennie brought here, and to act as hostess at a dance at the Ritz on Friday night."

Grenville groaned. "I won't stand for it," he exclaimed. "I'm in no condition to have a sick child on my hands. Gwennie is better off where he is. As for the dance, why, Honoria must be losing her mind. She's gone crazy." He flung up his hands.

"It's a moral antidote, and you've got to take your medicine," Iris declared. "As a man now

of public affairs, you must try and win back the confidence of the people who elected you to office. This is the quickest and surest way, and the least risk—to myself.”

“Always for yourself,” Grenville remonstrated.

“Exactly,” was the prompt response. “I’ve agreed to your aunt’s plan, and I’m tolerating you now, to keep from getting my own skirts soiled.”

She had him at a disadvantage, and Grenville knew it. “I’ll agree to anything,” he said, “providing you promise to reconsider what you just said about, well, about quitting me.”

“I’m willing to go on till things have righted themselves,” she said calmly. “Isn’t that enough?”

Grenville came to her side, and laid his hand appealingly upon her arm. “Don’t forsake me,” he breathed. “For God’s sake, don’t!”

Iris let his hand remain while she looked at him with cynical tolerance. “You know we’re not on the terms of affection necessary for married life. We really never suited each other, and never should have married.”

As he slouched forward, she caught him by both arms. “Pull yourself together.” His weak-

ness, his helplessness, for a moment, almost got the best of her.

“What do you know—what do you suspect?” he asked, showing what was uppermost in his mind. His affair with the beautiful dancer was still secondary in his thoughts.

Iris met his gaze stoically. “I know this,” she said, “that you can’t stifle truth much longer. And I suspect—that you are a coward.”

After she had gone from the room, he sank down into the nearest chair. And there Honoria found him a few minutes later. His face had a haggard, anguished expression. He gave a nervous start when his aunt leaned over him. “What’s wrong?” she asked.

Grenville, with staring eyes, caught hold of her arm and drew her down closer to him. “I saw her—Anne—this afternoon,” he muttered. “She’s come back.”

Honoria’s face became ashy white; she caught her breath. Then she mastered her own haunting fears with sudden self-control. “Why, Anne is dead and buried,” she said.

“I tell you, I saw her,” Grenville went on. “There was to have been a sale of Rodney’s things to-morrow, and I dropped into the Rem-

brandt out of curiosity. There was hardly anyone about. The front room was dark. It was there I saw her face as plainly as I see yours now."

"That's a matter between yourself and your conscience," returned Honoria imperiously.

He looked at his aunt aghast. "Surely you don't think that I had anything to do with Rodney Webb's murder?"

Honoria shook her head sadly. "You've been a great disappointment to me, Grenville," she complained bitterly, and left the room.

He followed her to the foot of the stairs, but she passed up unheeding. This sudden deprivation of sympathy, first from Iris, and now from a source least expected, unnerved him as nothing else had done.

And into this house of suspicion and dread came a little ghost of a child, in whose big sunken eyes were reflected the terror of lonesomeness and neglect; and who kept pleading with his nurse, with pitiful entreaty, not to leave him alone in the dark.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE AVENGER OF BLOOD

**T**HE problem left for Anne's solution, after Grenville's hurried departure from the Rembrandt, was to effect a quick getaway without detection. It occurred to her that the strange man, whom she had overheard conversing with Grenville, must have made his departure from the rear of the apartment; she recalled having heard a door slam.

Returning to the living room, she happened to notice a slight movement of a piece of tapestry, hung in panel effect against the outside wall. When she placed her hand near it, she discovered a draught of air.

Then came a surprising revelation. The tapestry concealed a door, evidently long in disuse. The lock on the door was broken. Opening it cautiously, she saw that the doorway had been boarded up on the outside. Several of the boards had been removed.

She crept through the opening, closing the door softly behind her, and down into a narrow areaway. This led back a considerable distance, between the high brick walls of two apartment buildings, recently constructed. The passageway had not as yet been walled up. She saw that it opened into the street, a block removed from the Rembrandt.

She had just turned into this narrow passageway when she espied the disappearing figure of a man. Evidently he had not seen her. She had the occult sense that this was the man whose voice she had heard. He wore a long overcoat, rather too large for him, and a gray cap; and he slouched as he walked.

She picked up the trail of the gray cap at the end of the passageway, where she was afforded a side view of the man's face as he turned abruptly to the right. But it was too dark now to see his features plainly. He had been swallowed up in the clutter and shadows of the street.

A policeman strolled by. She caught the flash of his badge of authority in the electric glare. Although she turned away, she felt his eyes upon her; she was positive he had stopped and was regarding her as a suspicious person.

All the old-time horror descended upon her. Above the din of her ears, she could hear again the creaking of prison gates, the drawing of bolts, the clicking of great locks, the jangling of keys. Arrested as a suspicious person, she would be arraigned in court, and her identity revealed. Why not give herself up now? With a little convulsive cry she wheeled around, to find that the policeman had passed on.

The incident left her helpless and unnerved, but by the time she had reached the rooming-house, mind and soul had succumbed once more to the bondage of one idea: to exact recompense for all that she had suffered, for the injustice that had been done her.

At the appointed hour she called on Mlle. Straluski.

"I hope you didn't expect me to call in my paint and feathers," said Anne over her cup of tea.

"It rather spoils what you say, ze illusion," replied the dancer; "but it really doesn't matter. You look *très chic* as you are——"

"In my store clothes?" Anne interposed.

"But why all black? Are you in mourning?"

"Yes; for my sins," was the swift response.

The dancer smiled. "How unpleasant it must be to have ze conscience," she commented languidly. "But come, tell me some of your experiences wis ze men. Was it an Indian, or a white man, zat made you suffer so?"

Anne hesitated a moment before replying. "You seem to live in such a nice dream," she said presently; "I don't wish to spoil it. You have so many admirers," indicating the many photographs scattered about the room, some in silver holders emblazoned with coats-of-arms, "I would not like to spoil your faith in them." Then she pointed to a photograph of Grenville, propped up against a cloisonné vase upon the piano. She had glimpsed it the moment she had entered the room. "Surely, you would not like to have your faith destroyed in a nice-looking man like that?"

Her little play of strategy brought results sooner than she had expected. The dancer, having obviously overlooked the photograph in her recent tantrums, rose from the lounge, where she had been so luxuriously ensconced, and made a bee-line for the piano. She picked up the photograph, tore it into bits, and then threw them into an empty flower bowl. "I hate him! I hate him!" she exclaimed.

“Oh, I’m so sorry—for the man,” Anne commented.

“I’m ze one to be pitied,” cried Mlle. Straluski, pacing the floor;

“Who is he?” Anne inquired with perfect naiveté.

The dancer stopped short. “Do you not read ze newspapers?” she gasped. When Anne implied that she did not, the dancer went on: “Oh, what a stupid life you must lead. Why, my maid, my chauffeur, even ze charwoman, everybody in New York, zay read about me and zis rich Grenville Karley. Zis morning, ze *Evening Gazette*—zay publish ze evening papers in ze morning in America—it had a wonderful picture of me. I love zat paper.”

“But there are other newspapers,” Anne put in casually.

“Ah, but ze *Evening Gazette* is what you call ze great political enemy of M’sieu Karley. Zat is ze reason I like it. Ze editor is so fearless. Zis morning he called M’sieu Karley a waster, a profligate, a traitor to ze people. He say also zat he cruelly deserted his first wife who was sent to prison unjustly and died there; also zat he is an unnatural father, and zat he neglects zis

woman's child." She paused. "Why do you look at me so funny?"

Anne quickly regained control of herself. "It all seems so strange to me," she said.

The dancer passed it up lightly. "All ze other papers say zat I am ze beautiful vamp, ze playing of kings, ze wrecker of homes. Oh, I love zat!"

"But you're not really wicked?" Anne interrogated, innocently enough.

Mlle. Straluski approached her, and spoke confidently. "To ze public I am ze wicked vamp, but in private life I am ze respectable married lady. My husband he play ze trombone in ze orchestra, and he looks like ze base drum, very round. But it is my business to advertise myself, and my husband he has no scruples in my making a little money on ze side. Ze Americans call it hush money."

Anne pretended not to understand. The dancer continued. "You have ze mind of ze little infant," she said. "All ze same, I like your sang-froid, your artlessness. But I have ze great mind for business. It is good business to ask big money for ze return of love letters."

“You mean M’sieu Karley’s letters?” Anne asked, with affected nonchalance.

Mlle. Straluski regarded her a moment curiously, then sat down beside her. “I like you, and now I tell you everyzing. I must tell somebody. I am like ze red-hot boiler—I must let off steam.”

Although Anne tried to appear disinterested through the rather dramatic recital, she would put a question now and then.

“Now, zat he ees reconciled wis his wife, he wants his letters back,” the dancer was saying.

This was news to Anne. “Are the letters worth so much?” she asked, without seeming to care whether they were or not.

“You shall judge for yourself.”

Mlle. Straluski rose, walked to the secretaire, and produced a bundle of letters, tied round with a bit of red ribbon. She showed them to Anne, who recognized the handwriting without a tremor. “If M’sieu Karley will not pay my price for zese letters,” the dancer declared impulsively, “zen I will show him up in ze newspaper.”

“What would you do?”

“I would have zem all published in ze *Eve-*

*ning Gazette.* Zat would fix him." She put back the letters.

So far Anne felt that she had put the dancer completely off her guard.

A telephone bell tinkled somewhere. Mlle. Straluski hurried off to answer it. Presently her voice, rather high-pitched, floated from the adjoining room.

The time had come. Gliding stealthily to the secretaire, Anne took the coveted letters from the drawer. In their place she substituted a bundle of letters picked up at random, topped with one of Grenville's letters, and tied with the same bit of ribbon. Hastily secreting the love letters in her handbag, she had just time to retrace her steps, when Mlle. Straluski re-entered the room.

"M'sieu Karley's lawyer he just talk to me over the 'phone,'" she announced. "He say zay will meet my terms, but zat I must wait till next week. M'sieu Karley he ees too busy making up wis his wife. Zay are giving ze big dance to-night at ze Ritz. But I know, it ees only to fool ze public."

Then, to Anne's trepidation, she walked over to the secretaire and began to rummage among her letters, strewn carelessly about. "I am look-



ing for ze receipt for ze purse," she explained.

"I'm sure I gave it back to you," said Anne.

"Yes; here it ees," the dancer announced. She picked it up, and then stuffed it away in the same drawer containing the letters.

Anne breathed easier when the dancer closed the drawer, and she realized that her little trick of deception had worked successfully. She left a few minutes later. And as Samson prayed to God that he might be avenged of the Philistines, so she prayed that her strength of purpose would not fail her. The house of Karley, like the house of Dagon, she would utterly destroy; pull it down like a house of cards. She was the avenger of blood.

Under the cover of night she crept from the rooming-house, and made for the editorial offices of the *Evening Gazette*. She rode part way, then became frightened and suspicious of an oldish man who kept ogling her. Leaving the car, she walked the rest of the way, after satisfying herself that she was not being followed; always that haunting fear of detection. She crossed the street several times in order to avoid a policeman on the corner. Once she gave a convulsive clutch at her handbag. It was open.

The priceless letters had been lost. Then she found them stuffed away at the bottom.

Another time she stopped short. The risk was too great for her to undertake the delivery of the letters. How could she prove their genuineness without revealing her own identity? Still, she kept on, hoping against hope. She steeled herself for this last effort, and entered the *Evening Gazette* building.

Whisked upwards, she stepped out into a small reception office, which she entered with veil drawn. Two men were conversing; one of them, she noticed, was in his shirt sleeves. She approached the boy at the door which opened into the city news room, and asked to see the City Editor. The boy returned shortly, and she was told to "wait a few minutes."

Presently a young man rushed through the room with an armful of papers, just off the press. The man in shirt sleeves took one, and another was tossed upon the table in front of her. But she could only read the headlines dimly through her heavy veil. She felt somehow secure behind it.

Evidently the glaring headlines on the front page had to do with a news story of importance,

for she heard the man in shirt sleeves remark: "Good story, and we're playing it up for all it's worth." Then a little later: "Too bad about the kid." Followed almost immediately by: "Funny piece of business all around." Then the other man spoke up. "I'm still inclined to believe there was a jealous woman back of it all."

After they had gone, an electric buzzer aroused the doorboy from his tale of adventure; he must have been in a very exciting part, for he slapped it down impatiently on the desk before answering the call from the city room. Anne took the signal to mean that she was about to be summoned inside. She rose, and instinctively thrust her hand into the bag to satisfy herself that the letters were still there. Her purpose was to give them over into accredited hands, and swear to their authenticity without revealing who she was, or how she got them.

As an emissary of revenge, her face grew hard and cold, and she clenched her hand until her nails tore into the tender flesh of her palm.

She was standing by the table now. She happened to glance down at the newspaper spread out before her. After the first hasty glance, she raised her veil. A moment of tenseness ensued.

Then she gave a little shuddering cry of anguish.

Gwennie was dying.

She read the awful news in the headlines. Her little son had been stricken, and was not expected to live through the night.

She read on a little farther. As a last hope, the physicians in charge had decided upon blood transfusion; they were calling for a volunteer—here the lines blurred.

All the hardness and cruelty left her face; the blaze of vengeance died away in her eyes; her fingers relaxed their hold upon the letters, the weapon of retaliation.

She heard the door boy returning. Without another moment's hesitation, she hurried out into the hall. The elevator door was open. She stepped inside, and dropped out of sight.

## CHAPTER XXII

### A WORLD OF GLASS

**D**R. JEX made no pretence at being a psychoanalyst; nor did he believe in ghosts. He was just plain physician and surgeon. Yet the rapid sequence of events in the lives of those closely connected with the mysterious case of Rodney Webb and the whisperings that seemed to come out of the air, gave him some concern. His inquiry into the case had been perfunctory, and the new evidence he had turned up, of really no great importance. He suspected no one—had no good reason to suspect anyone.

The afternoon was just drawing to a close when Grenville was announced. And the doctor gazed in frank astonishment at the man who came stumbling into his private office. The change that had taken place in him was almost uncanny; his face was full of lines, his eyes sunken, and his fingers twitched.

“Well, what can I do for you, Senator?” The doctor’s voice was cheery.

Grenville pulled himself together. “I just dropped in to pay a bill long overdue,” he said.

“Oh, bills are my least trouble,” said the doctor airily.

“But I wish to settle it up now, if you don’t mind,” said Grenville concisely.

The transaction was soon over with. Grenville lapsed again into silence, although his hands and eyes were never still; once he cast a nervous glance through the window.

“I’ve just been reading that you have Gwenie with you now,” the doctor broke the tenseness of reticence.

“Yes; we felt he wasn’t being looked after properly at the nursery,” came the reply. “He’s still in a very delicate condition, and a great charge for Iris. She’s not used to children, you know.”

“Evidently not so ill as to interfere with your social duties.” There was a hint of asperity in the doctor’s voice.

Grenville looked at him questioningly. “Oh, you mean the dance at the Ritz to-night? Aunt Honoria is responsible for that. She’s always

thinking up something to make me uncomfortable.”

Dr. Jex passed up the subject. “I don’t think I’ve seen you since the day of the polo game, almost a year ago. Many tragic things have happened since then.”

“Yes, and if much more happens I’ll go mad.” Grenville lost control of himself for a moment; he ran his fingers nervously through his hair. “You were abroad when Rodney Webb was—was murdered, I believe.” He shuddered. “I never thought Anne was that sort of woman,” he added bitterly.

Dr. Jex’s eyes lighted up instantly. “She wasn’t, and you know it,” he came back at him.

Grenville cringed a little. “Well, the jury thought so,” he said.

“If she could only have lived to have seen her name cleared of this awful charge,” the doctor put in abruptly.

“You think that’s likely?”

“Absolutely,” the doctor returned with deep conviction. “Her sad death has only delayed for a short time what is bound to come, complete vindication.”

“Maybe she isn’t dead,” Grenville muttered.

Dr. Jex regarded him intently. "What makes you think that?"

"Because I saw her the other afternoon," was the frank reply.

Grenville then related something of his experiences at Rodney's apartment. "I saw her face," he exclaimed; "it was living flesh and blood."

"But you can't prove it," said the doctor, skeptically.

"It was no delusion. I tell you, I saw her as plainly as I see you now."

"Nonsense," said the doctor.

Grenville looked at him warily. "You've been taking great interest in the case lately, I understand," he said, seemingly more composed. "Naturally you wish to see Anne's name cleared. We all should for that matter. But——" and he leaned far forward in his chair, "it is rather annoying that you should endeavor to incriminate me." He punctuated his remark with a laugh.

The doctor was plainly puzzled. Of all persons he had never suspected that the Senator was in any way criminally involved.

"I've known for some time," Grenville went



on blandly, "that you've had me shadowed. And your man is a very clever detective although he never detects anything. I first became aware of his presence when we were down at White Sulphur Springs. He was disguised as a chauffeur. He followed me everywhere, about the golf links, along the mountain paths, and then suddenly disappeared."

The doctor listened in great amazement, but hiding his concern.

"I saw him again," Grenville resumed, "while I was dining at the Ambassador. This time he was disguised as a waiter. But I lost sight of him before dinner was over."

Beads of sweat were standing out on his brow. He whipped out his handkerchief to mop his forehead, and as he did so a bit of paper, the fly leaf from a memorandum book, fell from his coat pocket, and became lodged in the back of the leather cushion. Dr. Jex lit a fresh cigar, to tide over the momentary silence.

"Now, I find that your man has been watching my house for the last few days," Grenville picked up the thread of his strange remarks. "He followed me downtown yesterday in the subway. He sat opposite me and pretended to be reading

a paper. I threw him off the scent, and came uptown by taxi. This morning my chauffeur 'phoned me he was ill, and that he was sending a substitute. When I came out of the house to drive here, this substitute chauffeur was no other than this damn detective of yours. So I walked here. But I'm sure he followed me." He rose and walked to the window. Drawing aside the curtain he exclaimed: "There he is now, across the street, hiding in the areaway. I can just see his shadow. Come, and see for yourself."

Dr. Jex stood unmoved. Grenville turned, and advanced towards him threateningly. "But you've got nothing on me, doctor," he shouted.

The doctor motioned silence. "You're a victim of your own imagination," he declared, calmly. "It never occurred to me that you were in any way implicated in the crime. I did employ a private detective, but it was not to shadow you."

Grenville gave a choking sound, and retreated a few steps. "Of course you will understand that I was only joking," he said, with a little shuddering laugh. "You will take it as a joke?"

"Oh, assuredly," was the cheerful reply. Then the doctor walked over and laid his hand upon

the Senator's shoulder. "You'd better drop everything, and take a good long rest," he urged.

"Perhaps I'd better," muttered Grenville. He faced the doctor squarely. "I think you ought to know that Gwennie is in very bad shape. We've called in a couple of doctors," mentioning them by name, "and we may need you."

"I'm ready to come when called upon," the doctor rejoined in a kindly tone.

"I'm not myself," Grenville went on almost incoherently; "and if anything happens, I want you to look after Gwennie. I've made Honoria and Iris promise not to stand in your way." And without another word he slunk out of the room.

The doctor gazed after him wonderingly and in pity; he faced the bitter truth. Grenville was living in a world of glass, and was being pursued by his own shadow. Was it remorse? Or what?

A little later, his secretary handed him a loose memorandum blank, bearing an address, which he had found on the leather chair recently occupied by Grenville. The doctor attached no significance to it, nor did it occur to him that the Senator might have dropped it. He glanced

hastily at the writing, then stuffed it in his waistcoat pocket as he left the room.

About eight-thirty o'clock, a call came from the Karley home. Gwennie was rapidly growing weaker, and the physicians in charge of the case wanted him to join them in consultation. They had given up all hope. Would he come at once?

## CHAPTER XXIII

### OUT OF THE NIGHT

**D**R. JEX bent over the bedside of Gwenie, and said very gravely: "There's only one hope of saving his life—blood transfusion."

The problem immediately rose how to find a person willing to give his blood, and at the soonest possible moment. A call for a volunteer was sent at once to the various hospitals. Expediency was the note of the hour. The operation of transfusion must be performed before morning if the child's life was to be saved; until that time the patient could be kept alive on stimulants.

After the consultation, Dr. Jex was forced to hurry away upon another emergency case. He planned to return shortly after midnight.

The occasional jingling of the telephone bell was the only sound to break the tomblike silence of the house. Presently it ceased altogether.

It was about one o'clock when the pull-bell of the service entrance echoed up the stairs. A few moments later the butler tiptoed into the room which adjoined the nursery, and announced, in low tones, that a strange woman had called, and desired to speak with one of the physicians. The younger of the two went down immediately into the servants' hall, where a veiled woman was waiting in the semi-gloom.

Anne had schooled herself for the ordeal. With supreme self-control she told the physician that she had heard of the child's critical condition, and had come to offer her blood for the transfusion. She did not expect any compensation; the only condition she would exact would be secrecy. She was a mother herself, she added, with a little catch in her voice, and had good reasons for keeping her identity unknown, even to the family.

Although she had resolved to face the worst, and was coolly indifferent to whatever Fate held in store for her, Anne felt relieved to learn that the family was absent; and such was the exigency of the case that the physician was only too glad to comply with her wishes.

She followed the physician tremulously upstairs, and quietly submitted to preliminary ex-

amination and the testing of her blood. When she removed her veil, showing the deep duskiness of her complexion, she met the questioning gaze of the physicians with swift candor. She was a pure-blooded white. Her bared shoulder and arm proved that. Her veins were rich in pulsing red blood.

Gwennie, by this time, had rallied a little after his first natural sleep in twenty-four hours; and to take advantage of his slightly improved condition, the physicians decided to perform the operation at once.

Anne steeled herself against any betrayal of emotion. Through the half open door she could see the little white bed in which Gwennie was lying. She was ready now for the trial, and she knew it would be a severe one. The physicians were flitting here and there. Presently the nurse, a sweet-faced motherly sort of woman, came over and drew a chair up beside her. She laid her hand tenderly upon her own.

“We had despaired of getting anyone to-night,” she said in a low tone of voice. “I’ve only been with the child a short time, but I’ve grown to love him. He’s such a lonely, forlorn little boy.”

Anne smiled wanly. "I came just in time, didn't I?" she breathed softly.

"You must have come in answer to my prayers," the nurse resumed, with some show of feeling. "It isn't professional to pray, but I've been asking God all night to send someone. You'll never miss what you're giving, and it doesn't take long."

"I'm not afraid," Anne said softly.

The nurse smiled reassuringly. "Half an hour after it's over, you'll be able to walk home. The weakness soon goes." She rose to go, when Anne held out her hand appealingly. "You said something about the child being so lonely."

"He's motherless, you know," came the response.

Anne's breast heaved; it was the only sign of what was going on inside of her. "Does he ever ask for his mother?" she ventured faintly.

"Oh, he calls for his 'muvver' constantly." The face of the nurse saddened as she spoke. "He's never forgotten her." She hurried away at the summons of the physician.

Anne sat with half-closed eyes; there was a tightening of the cords of her throat, and her



lips kept quivering. "Gwennie! My poor little lonely boy!" she kept moaning to herself.

When she was summoned into the nursery, she held onto the physician's arm like a blind woman, for she had closed her eyes, not daring to trust herself. And she never opened them until the operation was over. At first she felt very weak and dizzy, and in the dim glow of the room the doctors and the nurse appeared like moving phantoms. Only once, as she was about to be led out of the nursery, did she look down into the thin face on the pillow,—a face like alabaster, and aureoled by hair as shimmery and golden as sunset clouds. She gave a little smothered cry, then smiled and said: "I'm all right. I just feel a little weak, that's all."

She lay upon a couch in the adjoining room, dimly conscious of what was going on around her. She kept watching the faces of the nurse and doctors as they passed her. Was it good news—or bad? She wondered why they did not tell her.

Yet why should she be told? What possible interest could she have in the child? She had come out of the night to offer her blood, and when she was strong enough she would pass out

again into oblivion. Nobody would question her; perhaps nobody would care.

She had done what she could. This thought alone seemed to strengthen her. She kept praying softly to herself: "Oh, God, save him! Don't let him die! Oh, God! God!..."

As she became stronger she became more deeply conscious of her position. She recalled her mission to the newspaper office, her mission of hate, of revenge. But there was no hate in her heart now—only love. God is love. Never before had she felt so near to Him.

Suddenly it occurred to her that she had left the incriminating letters in her handbag. Why had she not destroyed them? The nurse and the doctors were in the nursery; the door was partly closed. She espied her handbag lying on a chair by a reading table. She crept cautiously from the couch. She was weak in the knees, but she finally gained the chair by the table, and sank down listless for a moment in its comfortable depths. She had difficulty even in opening the bag. She was still terribly weak. She reached in and drew forth the letters just to make sure they were still there. As she did so she thought she heard someone enter the room from the hall.

But before she could turn, everything seemed to fade away. She sensed that someone was standing before her. She stretched out her hand, then looked up, and with a clear vision, recognized Dr. Jex. A sickening dread came over her; she sank back with a weak moan. Then she heard a voice very near say: "You've nothing to fear, Mrs. Karley. Keep very quiet now, and leave everything to me."

When she looked up again he had gone. She closed her eyes, and laid her head back wearily against the chair. Her strength seemed to return now very quickly. When she again looked around in full consciousness, the doctor was standing by her side. She sensed that he had been watching her face; she wondered if he understood the story that it told. But there was no questioning in his eyes, only a deep kindly light.

He was the first to break the silence. "I'm sure Gwennie will pull through all right now," he said.

Anne gave a frightened glance over her shoulder. "You must take me away," she pleaded. "I couldn't face Grenville—now."

Dr. Jex then betrayed something in his eyes that he had so far kept hidden.

Anne's keen intuitiveness had not entirely left her. "What's happened?" she urged.

Dr. Jex demurred. "When you're stronger, I'll tell you."

"I think I should be told." She leaned forward in suspense. "Is Grenville . . . is he . . .?"

Dr. Jex leaned over and laid his hand on hers. "Perhaps you should know," he said. "It happened about an hour ago. He's dead."

Anne sank back with a moan. Deep silence ensued. Somewhere, out in the night, a clock struck two.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE BLACK FLOOD

**W**HEN Dr. Jex left the Karley house after the consultation, he had two urgent calls pending; one, in lower Fifth Avenue, the other, far uptown. He took them in turn, as they had been received. And as his car bowled along towards Washington Square he began fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for the uptown address, to familiarize himself with the location.

Instead of one slip of paper he produced two; and turning on the overhead light, he was surprised to find that they both bore the same address: 5 Riveredge Place. One was his secretary's memorandum, and the other, the loose leaf that someone evidently had dropped in his office. The difference was that his own contained more specific directions for reaching the address. He read: "Fifth Avenue to 145th St.—turn right—bridge—half block—past lumberyard—3rd house—top floor, front."

His secretary's abbreviated directions, taken over the telephone, were perfectly intelligible. But where did this second address come from? And almost simultaneously with the thought, he exclaimed, half aloud: "Senator Karley!"

There was an expression of perplexed amazement upon his kindly face when he finally started uptown, after a longer lapse of time than he had anticipated.

Riveredge Place was a short, mean street, just a block removed from the river front, and lined with ramshackle dwellings of frame; it was deserted at this hour of the night, and unpleasantly suggestive of river front thugs. Lights gleamed fitfully here and there. No. 5 was a three family affair; the hall smelly, and lighted only by a single gas-jet.

The chauffeur, as a matter of precaution, accompanied the doctor to the top floor. Their footfalls brought forth a red-visaged, middle-aged woman, who waited for them at the top landing. It was evident that she was expecting the doctor's arrival, for the moment he reached the top, she pointed to the door of what appeared to be a small hall-room.

"He's very low, sir," she said; and she had a

rather pleasing voice. She evinced surprise when the doctor, after recovering his wind, asked her the patient's name.

"I thought you knew him, sir," she resumed. "He seemed to know all about you, and had me 'phone to your office from the drug-store. He sent my husband downtown at the same time with a note for the other gentleman that's called on him afore. His name, sir, is—Mr. Peck. He's been one of my best lodgers, and pays his rent regular as clockwork."

Dr. Jex had no recollection of a Mr. Peck. "What's his business?" he inquired further.

"He's very close-mouthed about that, sir," came the quick reply; "but he seems to have enough to live on comfortably. I'm sure he's seen better days."

Dr. Jex entered the room. A smelly kerosene lamp was burning on a small, bamboo-legged stand by the cot on which the patient lay. The doctor's first move was to open the window. At first glance, he saw that the man was a stranger. He was middle-aged, with sparse, grayish hair. As he drew down the coverlets, the patient labored for breath. He was in a coma. And it did not

take the doctor long to discover that he was dying, and dying fast.

His only hope now was to get him out of the coma. After the first restorative measures, he sat down beside the cot, to await the first signs of returning consciousness. He noticed the patient's skin had a decided yellowish tinge; the fever had dried it like parchment. An hour passed.

Dr. Jex, bending over the dying stranger, watched the first signs of returning consciousness: quickening of the breath, fluttering eyelids, and then the stare of a soul, poised on the edge of eternity, as it tries to find its bearings. He laid his hand tenderly upon the man's brow, moist and cold. The man spoke, but his words were inarticulate. Then he drew one hand up towards the pillow.

Dr. Jex, following the direction, placed his hand under the pillow, and drew forth a leather wallet, between the folds of which was a folded sheet of foolscap paper. Then he caught the words: "Read . . . sign."

The dying man had just strength enough to affix his signature to the contents of the paper, but the name he signed was not Peck.



As the revelation flashed over him, Dr. Jex knelt by the side of the cot. "God have mercy upon your soul!" he breathed reverently. The man raised his hand again, and it appeared to the doctor that he made the sign of the cross. The next moment he lay in the stillness and coldness of death.

As death took its toll at 5 Riveredge Place, Grenville was racing north in his car. His one thought now was to save himself. There was no telling what a dying man might do; a stroke of the pen and he would be doomed. His purpose was to reach No. 5 in time to destroy all papers, all evidence, if the man died before he reached there, and before the arrival of the coroner.

The note that had been delivered to him at the Ritz at the height of the dance, calling him to the bedside of a dying man, had come upon him, the startling import of it, like a black flood, sweeping away all his self-confidence and leaving his senses stunned.

As he shot down West 145th Street, for the traffic regulations were relaxed at this hour, he barely missed striking a woman crossing the street. He caught sight of her terrorized face, and somehow it reminded him of Anne. The

delusion grew more vivid as he rushed on, until it became a spectre racing along with the car. He struck out at it with one hand as if to drive it away.

Looming in his path was the great bridge; and it seemed to be moving like a gray phantom. Through the rising mist of the river, the lights shone out like eyes—eyes that see all, know all. The realization that the bridge was drawn for river traffic came to him in time to use his emergency brake; and he would have done so, had he not been seized with a newer and greater fear.

The man was not dying . . . it was a trick . . . he was riding into a trap.

Yawning before him was release from all that he had suffered—fear, remorse. He put his foot down hard upon the accelerator. A shout of warning fell heedless upon his ears. He gripped the wheel, and closed his eyes . . .

With terrific impact, the car tore through the gate that guarded the open draw. It left the roadway like a catapult, and shot through the air, its red tail-light gleaming like a falling meteor. A fearful splash, a shriek in the stilly night, and then uncanny silence.

Half an hour later the police, grappling with hooks, brought Grenville's body to the opposite shore, where it had been washed by the tide. It seemed like the irony of Fate that Dr. Jex should be the first to identify the body, his departure from the neighborhood having been delayed by the tragedy.

The recognition, by the aid of the policeman's flashlight, stunned him for a moment. The police called it an unavoidable accident. Perhaps they were right. Why should Grenville take his own life when he was not implicated in the crime? Dr. Jex knew this to be a certainty. The confession of the dead man, now in his possession, actually had established that fact.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CONFESSION

\* **T**HE murderer's confession seemed to be written in cipher. In the deep silence of the night, Dr. Jex translated it for Anne. At first glimpse, the lettering appeared to be jumbled, and it puzzled her; but the moment the doctor started to write it out rapidly in plain English, she understood perfectly.

The first paragraph, in its original form, appeared like this:

“tI saw ym dnah taht kcurts nwod yendoR bbeW. doG ytip em, a reredrum! I evah ton nwonk a lufecaep tmemom ecnis I delruh taht reggad otni sih traeh, dna tnes na tneconni namow ot tmemnosirpmi dna htaed.”

Anne read the same paragraph, decoded, with quickened breath:

\* NOTE: To gain full knowledge of the confession, the reader must spell out each word backwards, of the paragraphs marked 1 and 2, and write them out in the order printed.

“It was my hand that struck down Rodney Webb. God pity me, a murderer! I have not known a peaceful moment since I hurled that dagger into his heart, and sent an innocent woman to imprisonment and death.”

She read on:

“In the days of my wild youth, I was an expert boomerang and knife thrower, and I traveled for several years with the side-show of a circus. The sight of another woman in Rodney Webb’s arms seemed not only to drive me mad, but to bring back to me all of my former skill as a knife thrower. Concealed in the gloom of the living room, I hurled the fatal dagger between the parted curtains. I saw it go to its mark. I crept away unseen.”

There was a questioning in Anne’s mind as she continued to decipher the strange document:

(1) “redruM saw ni ym traeh nehW I dettimda srM yelraK otni eht tnemtrapa taht gnineve. ehS saw eht gnivil egami fo ym rethguad, yraM, ohw ym retsam os ylleurc deyarteb. tuB I did ton wonk taht eh dah deniur ym yraM litnu taht

gninrom, nehW ehs dessefnoc gnihtyreve ot em. I dediced neht ot llik mih. tuB I ylno dediced nopu eht rennam fo htaed nehW I was srM yelraK gnildnah eht reggad ni eht llah. tI saw yldrawoc dna leurc, tub siht ytleurc smees ot eb nrob ni em, rof ni ym sniev swolf eht doolb fo eht egavas iroaM, tsuj sa eht naidnI doolb swolf ni eht sneiv fo ym rethguad. reH rehtom saw a dedoolb-lluf siouqorI, a hsilooF egairram I detcartnoc noos retfa gnimoc ot adanaC ot kees ym enutrof.”

Anne shuddered and stopped reading. When Dr. Jex glanced up, she was sobbing softly to herself. He kept his silence. Presently she seemed to get hold of herself, and read on:

“The hall door was left open only as a ruse, and I wore gloves so as not to betray my identity by fingerprints. Up to the moment that I hurled the dagger, I did not think of incriminating the woman in Rodney Webb’s mad embrace. I swear that. But I managed to keep my nerve——”

The confession trailed off here in cipher:

(2) “I ylno denekaew eht tsal yad fo eht lairt. yM traeh delb rof siht namow gnireffus ni ym

daets. oS I dessefnoc ym emirc ot ym rethguad.  
 oT ym esirprus ehs edam em raews no eht elbiB ot  
 peek ym ecnelis. ehS deralced taht ehs enola dlouc  
 enota rof ym elbirret nis. ehT txen yad ehs  
 denrut revo ot em lla fo reh efil sgnivas sa a  
 rehcaet dna relaeh, dna neht deraeppasid. I  
 reven was reh niaga. yM yraM tsum eb daed.”

It was true, then. This strange woman had offered herself as a ransom. Anne read on hurriedly, her breath coming brokenly, as the full revelation of the confession was placed before her:

“Mary was very religious by nature, and a little queer in the head, I always thought. She had shifted for herself after her mother died, and had lived as a white woman, although she was a half-breed, and often visited her Indian kin up North. She was gifted with a strange power, and had a wonderful will. Rodney Webb was the only person who ever succeeded in breaking down this will. She called him an evil spirit—a demon. She said this psychic power of hers was a gift from God, and that her mission in life was to use it for good. She prayed constantly. Often she would say she had walked with God—had talked

with Him as Moses did on Mt. Sinai. She said the body meant nothing. That the soul of man was soon to come into its own, and all physical suffering would be at an end."

There was a questioning in Anne's mind. How could she account for her striking resemblance to this woman called Mary? She turned once more to the document, and read:

"My daughter declared that not only was she a physical double of Mrs. Karley, but that their souls were attuned; that they were like two units drawing together for some Eternal design; that Mrs. Karley was shackled, but that she, my daughter, would break these chains and send her out into a free world. Her last words to me were: 'I go to offer myself as a sacrifice for a great sin that has been committed for my sake.' God alone knows what has become of my Mary."

The lettering here became rather faint, the unsteady scrawl of a dying man. To Anne, one fact stood out distinct—the murderer had died without knowing his daughter had actually made the great sacrifice. What a strange atonement! . . . She hurried through the concluding paragraph:



“I kept my oath of silence until Mrs. Karley died in prison, and then I confessed my crime to Senator Karley. I begged him to hand me over to the police. I wanted to clear the name of the woman who had suffered so unjustly. But he kept putting me off. He bought my silence with gold. I was too much of a coward to give myself up to the law. Then I fell ill. My conscience began to trouble me. I sent an anonymous note to a newspaper, setting forth that Rodney Webb had not met his death by a woman’s hand. This seemed to silence the voice of my conscience. Then I had a longing to visit the scene of my crime. I managed to enter the apartment by stealth. To my surprise, there I ran across Senator Karley. We had it out. Again I pleaded with him to reveal everything, to clear his former wife’s name. But he cowed me into secrecy. I walked home in a daze. I fell unconscious at the door of my lodgings. Now, death stares me in the face. I confess my crime . . . I wipe out the stain that has been placed upon an innocent woman’s name . . . God have mercy upon my soul . . .”

The confession was signed:

“SEMAJ SREKCIW”

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE DAWN

**T**HE night for Anne had been too tense for sleep; she sat wide-eyed in the light of vindication that had come too late, and in the radiance of a dawn that was creeping over the housetops.

The mystery of Rodney Webb's death had been cleared up; it seemed so simple, now that she knew all the particulars.

She was thankful that Grenville had had no part in the killing; his knowledge of the real perpetrator of the murder had made him an accessory after the fact. And this knowledge had turned his world into glass, had haunted him, until he was finally driven to his doom. His race had run out; he had no real moral stamina; he couldn't help himself. And she had tried so hard to be loyal to him, but he wouldn't let her.

How should she govern her life from now on? Was she not still a dead woman? She had pro-

tested this fact to Dr. Jex, and he had replied: "Much better that you remain dead. It would be endless misery for you to come back, to try and take your place again in the world."

And he had promised her that the court would wipe the stain from her name, and rehabilitate her memory. He had told her of a soldier of France who had been shot for cowardice, and afterward declared innocent, the judgment of the court freeing his name from stain.

What about Gwennie? Her heart cried out for her baby's love. She wanted him; she needed him.

The questioning was still in her mind, when she heard the chirp of sparrows. She rose and walked swiftly to the window, as in answer to a call—a call from out of the North. Was it Tom's voice?

What was there about this giant of the woods that could conquer this fugitive something within her? Suppose that she returned to him? What would he say?

"Oh, I don't want to do a thing that's wrong," she said, half-aloud and impulsively, to herself.

Then came a still small voice which said: "Do

the right thing then, and call it wrong if you prefer."

Unseen forces had set her free, had righted a great wrong. Did she not owe everything to the Eternal purpose, which never fails?

She recalled what the doctor had said about taking Gwennie to his lodge in the Adirondacks, after the child had regained its strength.

The possibilities of this seemed to refresh her. She looked more hopeful now, but through a mist of gathering tears. She drew forth the tiny silver crucifix, the emblem of supreme sacrifice, and kissed it reverently.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tom's camp was deserted. The loggers had gone with the last drive, and only a few Indians remained behind.

Tom sat alone in his cabin, broken in spirit, and seemingly powerless to help himself. Everything was at an end. Only a short time back and he had felt that all the world was his, and now he had none of it. He had been deprived of the only real happiness he had ever known. Once again he had been cheated. The only light that broke through the clearing into his sense of desolation was the vague hope contained in the

message that he had found pinned to the wall, ". . . till we meet again."

He sat before the dead ashes of logs, his head buried in his arms. All at once he became conscious of someone else in the room; he heard his name called, very softly: "Tom!"

He turned and saw a shadow in the doorway, a shadow which became very real as he gazed at it.

"May I come in?" It was Anne's voice. As he said nothing, she added: "I'm glad you waited for me. All the others seem to have gone."

At this he shot up from his chair like an arrow, and hurried to her side. She stood passive at his approach.

"Godamighty, but I've been lonely without you, Woman!" he cried; "but I reckoned you'd come back to me."

Then he clasped her to him, and she seemed to melt into his encircling arms as if they had been a mould, and it was her—the Woman's—resting place forever.

Presently she began to slip away from him like the shadow of a cloud upon the earth. He begged her to stay; he was only partly conscious of what he was doing or saying.

She had gone. His arms were empty. The

loneliness of things oppressed him. As he stood in his cabin door he shook himself free from the shadows of a mad dream.

Dawn was turning the lake into shimmering gold; all about him was the scent of green, growing things.

“. . . Till we meet again,” was the challenge of everything about him.

The trail from his door shone yellow in the early glimmering light. Was it a road to follow?

**THE END**









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